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## President Erdoğan: “We have never cast a shadow over Istanbul’s legacy, and we will continue to protect it”

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated, “Until today, we have not cast a shadow over the sacred memory and legacy of Istanbul, and God willing, we will continue to protect this legacy.”

Page 2



### Minister Fidan: We Are Determined to Further Deepen Our Strategic Partnership with Italy

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan stated, “We are determined to further deepen our strategic partnership with Italy. Our President and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni have expressed their commitment to this goal in the strongest possible terms.”

Page 4



### North Macedonia Celebrates 34 Years of Independence

North Macedonia, one of the Balkan countries that separated from the former Yugoslavia, is celebrating the 34th anniversary of its independence.

SOURCE: VEDAT KURT

Page 6

### Kazakhstan’s Nuclear Move: Moscow and Beijing in the Shadow of Energy Ambitions

Kazakhstan’s President Tokayev stated that the first nuclear power plant under construction will be insufficient to meet the country’s growing energy needs, emphasizing that “planning for second and third plants is mandatory.”

Page 12



### “Kyrgyzstan’s Term Presidency of the Organization of Turkic States” Conference Held in Ankara

Kyrgyzstan’s term presidency of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) was discussed at a conference in Ankara.



Page 6

### 6th Meeting of Religious Affairs and Religious Administration Heads of the Organization of Turkic States Held

Page 8



### President Tokayev Announces Kazakhstan’s Vision for a Digital Future

Page 9

### Montenegro President Milatovic Emphasizes Raising Dialogue with Turkey to “Strategic Level”

Page 11



### President of Turkmenistan Invites SCO Members to the Trans-Caspian Route

Page 12



### Energy Cooperation Strengthens in the Turkic World

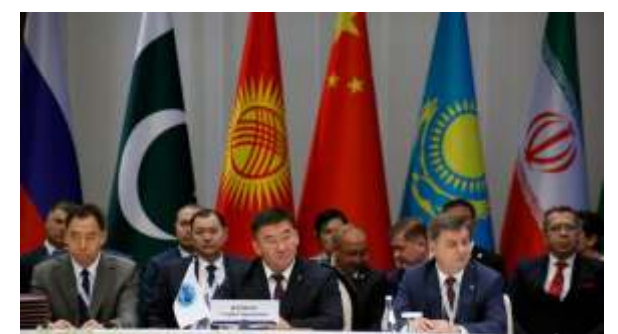
A trilateral meeting on energy and water management was held between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. As a result of the talks, a series of protocols were signed regarding water release from the Toktogul Dam, electricity supply, and energy transit.

Page 14

### Martyr Captain Cengiz Topel Mediterranean Storm-2025 Exercise Held in Sadrazamköy

The “Martyr Captain Cengiz Topel Mediterranean Storm-2025 Exercise,” conducted with the participation of the land, air, and naval elements of the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command and the Security Forces Command, included the organization of a “Distinguished Observer Day.”

Page 13



### 44th SCO RATS Council Meeting Held in Kyrgyzstan

Following the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) leaders’ summit, a council meeting to discuss joint steps in counter-terrorism was held in the city of Cholpon-Ata.

Page 7



### Tashkent Breaking Records in Investment and Exports: New Moves from Uzbekistan’s Leader

Page 10



### Hops: The Hidden Key to Sleep and Serenity

Page 14



Hasan Yiğit

### Time Rising with the Voice of the People: The Silent Echo of Modern Democracy

Page 15



# President Erdoğan: “We have never cast a shadow over Istanbul’s legacy, and we will continue to protect it”

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated, “Until today, we have not cast a shadow over the sacred memory and legacy of Istanbul, and God willing, we will continue to protect this legacy.”

Erdoğan began his speech at the opening ceremony of the exhibition “Five Painters, One City: My Beloved Istanbul”, held at the Lütfi Kırdar Congress and Exhibition Center under the leadership of collector Mehmet Çebi, who is the recipient of the Presidential Culture and Arts Grand Award, by greeting the participants. He thanked the owner of the collection and all the thinkers, cultural figures, and artists who contributed to the exhibition.



**Congratulating the artists, Erdoğan said,**

**“I also commemorate with mercy the great master Mr. Ayhan Türker, who passed away three years ago, leaving his works to us for this exhibition. May God bless his soul and grant him paradise.”**

Erdoğan wished that the exhibition, which reflects the city and human landscapes from Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque to Emirgan, from Maiden’s Tower to the slopes of Beylerbeyi, from Çınaraltı to Mihrabat, and from Eyüpsultan to Üsküdar, along with the historical, cultural, and architectural texture of Dersaadet, would bring goodness.

Reciting the line “Eğer maksud eserse mısra-ı berceste kafidir.” from a verse written three centuries ago by Koca Mehmed Ragıp Pasha, a diplomat and poet who also served as Grand Vizier in the Ottoman Empire, Erdoğan said, “I would like to express that I see each work here as the most beautiful lines of Istanbul, akin to a harmonious poem composed in its entirety. Art lovers living in Istanbul will certainly visit this exhibition, which has been prepared with great effort, until September 16. I

also believe that Istanbul enthusiasts from our other provinces will come and witness this festival of art firsthand. I invite all my brothers and sisters who cherish art and Istanbul to visit the exhibition.”

**“In every branch of art, we have shone like stars across our cultural geography”**

President Erdoğan emphasized that these sacred lands, where they have lived freely for a thousand years and will remain the homeland of the nation until the end of time, host some of the world’s oldest civilizations. He stated that these civilizations produced their achievements in philosophy, architecture, science, art, politics, and law first on this land. Erdoğan explained that the works produced in Anatolia, along with the resulting values, spread over centuries first to the surrounding areas and then to the entire world.

Highlighting the nation’s significant contributions to this process spanning a millennium, Erdoğan continued: “With our faith, language, traditions, motifs, and our scientific and cultural treasures, we have provided humanity with many values. We succeeded in reflecting and conveying all elements that nurture the spiritual roots forming our identity through our art and works. Look at the late Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, who, in an interview in 1932—exactly 93 years ago—defined



the purpose of art as follows: ‘The purpose of art is beauty. Beauty is perfection. The material of art seeks to engrave this perfection.’ As a nation, we regarded art as the cornerstone of the path to goodness, beauty, truth, and reality. We always viewed our works with this wise perspective. We also determined our style accordingly. Through our poetry, music, architectural works, and cultural assets, we have shone like stars in every branch of art, not only in Anatolia but throughout our cultural geography. It is undeniable that the most dazzling of these stars is Istanbul.”

**“This sacred city has been the source of our cultural and artistic life”**

Erdoğan noted that Istanbul has been the yeast of the artistic dough they have kneaded in the history and civilization vessel since the first days of the blessed conquest.

“In the words of master Necip Fazıl, this sacred city, where the sea and land meet, constitutes the most fertile environment of our cultural and artistic life, even often its source. With its distinguished and rich architecture, historical and cultural depth, Istanbul has served as the header of our artworks. Its streets, squares, mosques, fountains, hills, and more have adorned our canvases alongside our poems, novels, and folk songs. The legacy of all civilizations has been sealed with our nation’s thousand-year imprint and preserved here, in Istanbul,” he said.

President Erdoğan emphasized that Istanbul means civilization, history, science, and art, stating:

“This city is one where sermons are delivered across three continents. This city hosts sacred legacies. Istanbul, together with our 86 million citizens, is a common value and shared wealth of the Turkish-Islamic world.”

**Erdoğan said that he had been on many continents from Asia to America, from Africa to Europe.**

He stated that although he had visited hundreds of cities around the world for various reasons, he had never seen another city like Istanbul, with its history, nature, spirituality, and beauties woven into every square meter. Erdoğan emphasized that he had always been honored to be born in this city, to grow up in it, and to serve this sacred city.

Erdoğan expressed that he had the honor of serving Istanbul and the







people of Istanbul with love for 4.5 years as Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality, and for 28 years as Prime Minister and then as President, saying: “With projects from the Marmaray to the Eurasia Tunnel, from the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge to the Grand Çamlıca Mosque, from Istanbul Airport to the Atatürk Cultural Center, from the reopening of Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque for worship to the Rami Library and many more, we are fortunate to leave behind lasting works and traces in Istanbul that, God willing, will always be remembered with goodness in the future.”

Stating that they have never been satisfied with what they have done for Istanbul and never will be, Erdoğan said:

“As long as God gives us life and opportunity, we will continue to serve Istanbul and the people of Istanbul. We will continue not as the ruler (hakim) of Istanbul but as its servant (hadim). As long as this soul is in this body, our love for Istanbul will never end. I will carry the honor of being a servant of the world’s most beautiful city, Istanbul, on my chest with great pride like a medal until my last breath.”

President Erdoğan underlined that, just as they did 30 years ago, today too they act with the awareness of being worthy of this city and with the responsibility of protecting the legacy of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, inspired by Istanbul:

“From Gaza to Syria, from Somalia to Sudan, from the Caucasus to the Balkans — wherever it may be — we are trying to do justice to being Istanbulites. Because we learned struggle here. We learned patience, perseverance, and never giving up in the streets of this city. This city taught us to be conscientious, to act with compassion and mercy. It taught us to stand with the oppressed and against the oppressor. It taught us to protect the truth no matter the cost. It was Istanbul that taught us to think big, to set ambitious goals for the future, and to run toward those goals. Praise be to God, until today we have not cast a shadow over Istanbul’s sacred memory and legacy. God willing, from now on too, we will continue to protect this legacy as it deserves.”



**“Beloved Istanbul will continue to be a source of inspiration for our young artists and painters for centuries”**

Erdoğan stated that he saw today’s exhibitions as a reflection of the struggle they are waging on the political stage in the field of art, and said that they encourage every project that will enrich the cultural and artistic life, particularly in Istanbul, and increase diversity in this field. President Erdoğan stated that, particularly in the field of painting, they now have a much more dynamic climate compared to the past and that they view with appreciation and follow with satisfaction the efforts being made in this regard.

Pointing out that painters who closely follow innovations around the world, constantly improve themselves, and deepen and advance in their art are taking Turkish painting to new heights every day, Erdoğan said: “Imitative, complex-ridden works alien to society and its core values no longer attract as much interest as before. I find

this very valuable for Turkey’s cultural and artistic heritage. The truth is that if you want to create lasting works, open new paths, and make your mark on world painting, you must first be yourself. Otherwise, it is impossible to escape the whirlpool of imitation or move one step further.”

Erdoğan emphasized that in this context he considers it very important for young painters to take the great masters present among them as role models and to benefit from their knowledge and experience, and added: “I strongly believe that the Century of Türkiye, which we are advancing toward with determined steps, will be shaped by the works of our painters, poets, writers — in short, our scholars, cultural and artistic figures. And of course, beloved Istanbul, this magnificent city, will continue to be a source of inspiration for many centuries to come, especially for our young artists and young painters.” Thanking those who contributed to the organization of the exhibition, Erdoğan expressed his wish that the exhibition

would be beneficial for the country and the nation, especially the cultural and artistic community.

President Erdoğan concluded his speech after reciting the poem “My Beloved Istanbul” (“Canım İstanbul”) by poet, writer, and thinker Necip Fazıl Kısakürek.

#### Notes from the program

At the program, Mehmet Mehdi Eker, Chairman of the Board of the Agricultural Strategy and Policy Development Center (TARPOL), along with artists İskender Pala, İbrahim Sadri, Seyfullah Kartal, Erol Eren and Nur Haktan recited poems about Istanbul. Mehmet Çebi presented President Erdoğan with a painting of Eminönü by Enver Fazıl.

The exhibition also opened during the program, showcasing works by artists Ayhan Türker, Mustafa Sekban, Faruk Cimok, Selahattin Kara, and Enver Fazıl. After cutting the ribbon with his accompanying delegation, President Erdoğan toured the exhibition.

The program was attended by Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy; Presidential Communications Director Burhanettin Duran; AK Party Deputy Chairmen Ömer Çelik (Party Spokesperson), Ahmet Büyükgümüş (Organization), Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya, and Faruk Acar; AK Party Central Decision and Executive Board (MKYK) members Mahir Ünal and Derya Ayaydın; Istanbul Governor Davut Gül; AK Party Istanbul Provincial Chair Abdullah Özdemir; as well as several AK Party deputies and artists.

The “Five Painters, One City: My Beloved Istanbul” exhibition will remain open to visitors until September 16.





# Minister Fidan: We Are Determined to Further Deepen Our Strategic Partnership with Italy

**Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan stated, “We are determined to further deepen our strategic partnership with Italy. Our President and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni have expressed their commitment to this goal in the strongest possible terms.”**

Fidan made these remarks during a joint press conference in Rome with Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani.

Expressing his gratitude to Tajani for his hospitality, Fidan noted that he always engages in productive and comprehensive discussions with his Italian counterpart.

Highlighting that the meeting focused on enhancing cooperation on bilateral and regional issues, Fidan emphasized, “We are determined to further deepen our strategic partnership with Italy. Our President and Prime Minister Meloni have repeatedly demonstrated their strong commitment to this objective.”

Fidan underscored that both countries are taking concrete steps through various

joint projects to contribute to mutual prosperity and security, noting that Italy and Turkey are also working on initiatives that benefit other countries in the region.

He pointed out that trade, energy, defense, migration, and combating organized crime are key areas in Turkey-Italy bilateral relations, with the trade volume between the two countries exceeding \$32 billion.

### Cooperation in the Defense Industry

Fidan stated that the goal is to raise this figure to \$40 billion. He also highlighted the cooperation in the defense sector, noting, “We are very pleased with our collaboration in defense. Recently, Baykar’s acquisition of the historic Italian aerospace company Piaggio Aerospace, as well as its partnership with the Italian defense firm Leonardo, sets an example for our region.”

He added that the progress made regarding Eurofighter procurement is extremely important for both Turkey and Italy, and emphasized that the Mediterranean region holds a key position for Europe’s energy security and connectivity.

Minister Fidan noted:

“Enhancing our cooperation in these areas will bring significant benefits at both the bilateral and regional levels. At the same time, activities within our maritime jurisdictions must be conducted in full respect of the sovereign populations, in accordance with international maritime law, and in effective coordination. We highly appreciate Italy’s sensitivity on this matter.”

Fidan also stated that he and his Italian counterpart discussed irregular migration



in the Mediterranean, emphasizing that Turkey is determinedly combating irregular migration. He noted that, thanks to Turkey’s efforts, pressures along the Eastern Mediterranean migration route have decreased, and he highlighted that joint efforts with Italy will continue in this regard.

### Turkey’s Expectations from the EU

Regarding Turkey-EU relations, Fidan said, “Full EU membership remains a strategic goal for Turkey. In this process, our expectation from the EU is to avoid prejudiced attitudes driven by narrow political calculations and to develop a vision that includes steps to revitalize Turkey’s EU accession process.”

Fidan emphasized that Italy’s support for Turkey’s EU membership reflects a strategic and long-term perspective and expressed the hope that this approach will be adopted by all EU member states. He underlined that both countries share a common vision on strengthening European defense, stating, “A sustainable and deterrent security architecture can only be achieved with the full participation of Turkey, which has NATO’s second-largest army.”

Fidan added that he had the opportunity to extensively discuss regional and international issues with his Italian counterpart. In this context, they reviewed their joint commitment to establishing a fair and lasting peace in Ukraine. He noted Turkey’s concrete contribution by hosting direct negotiation processes and emphasized that Ankara will continue to act as a facilitator and exert every effort to end the war.

### Africa and Libya

Fidan mentioned that current developments in Africa were also discussed, highlighting the need to support prosperity and stability on the continent. Regarding Libya, he stated, “We reiterated our shared stance on maintaining the political process and encouraging field actors to engage in dialogue. Ensuring Libya’s unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty, stability, and security on a lasting basis is of great importance. Turkey and Italy will continue our efforts in this regard.”

Minister Fidan drew attention to one of the main issues on the international

agenda: Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza and its expansionist policies in the region. He stated, “With its attack in Doha, Israel has violated the sovereignty of yet another country. I want to reiterate that we stand in full solidarity with Qatar in the face of this despicable attack.”

Fidan noted that Qatar is a country successfully carrying out mediation efforts through a peaceful foreign policy. He added that Israel’s expansionist policies reaching Qatar should serve as a wake-up call to those who have turned a blind eye to Benjamin Netanyahu.

The minister also said, “We call on the international community to take the necessary measures against Israel. We welcome the recent announcements by many Western countries that they will recognize the State of Palestine during the UN General Assembly.”

Fidan stated that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will participate in the high-level week of the UN General Assembly, where Turkey will continue its efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people and seek a lasting solution to the Palestinian issue. He added that, as two NATO allies, Mediterranean countries, and strategic partners, Turkey and Italy will further strengthen their friendship through future steps.

### Libya Agenda

Answering journalists’ questions, Fidan said Turkey and Italy follow the same policy regarding Libya. He added, “In recent years, Turkey has balanced its relations with the West and the East regarding Libya. In this context, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh, visited Ankara. Various visits and meetings of Saddam Haftar and Bilqasim Haftar in Turkey have also taken place. Currently, there is no visit by General Khalifa Haftar planned to Turkey, but such a visit would also be a normal matter.”

### Israel’s Genocide in Gaza

Fidan emphasized that international pressure on Israel has been insufficient and not deterrent. He stated, “As of today, genocide created through systematic starvation continues in Gaza. Israel’s expansionism and threat in the region are steadily increasing.”

He highlighted that, although delayed, a major awakening has occurred in the





international community, which is making progress faster than expected under the international system. “We are witnessing the gradual dismantling of the illusion Israel created before the eyes of the international community over the years. Its true face and intentions are becoming apparent,” Fidan said. The minister pointed out that the world has seen how Israel flagrantly violates every principle considered sacred by humanity. “The world, especially Western societies, is in conflict with its own values,” he stated. Fidan warned that the clash between Israel’s occupation and Western values could lead to more significant consequences. He stressed that the international community and system must make greater efforts, calling on the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) to take stronger measures to stop Israel; otherwise, the already heavily eroded international system could completely collapse.

Russia’s Violation of Polish Airspace  
Regarding developments related to Russia’s violation of Polish airspace during strikes on targets in Ukraine, Fidan recalled that an extraordinary meeting was held with NATO permanent representatives under Article 4. “I hope we do not see this repeated,” he said. Fidan emphasized that since the start of the Russia-Ukraine War, Turkey has repeatedly stressed the risk of escalation and the urgent need to end the conflict. He added that Turkey has hosted peace and ceasefire talks and prisoner exchanges and continues to engage at various levels to facilitate resolution. The minister highlighted Turkey’s capacity and responsibility as a regional actor, noting that, as with the conflict in Gaza, Turkey can foresee the types of dangers that exist and that each of these risks has materialized. He stressed that peace and ceasefire talks between Russia and Ukraine must resume, stating, “Turkey and Italy share the view that this war must end as soon as possible.”  
Minister Fidan on the War and NATO Efforts

Minister Fidan emphasized that the war poses a threat to both regional and global security, noting that NATO member countries have fulfilled their responsibilities and engaged in consultations. He stressed that greater efforts are needed to end the war as soon as possible.

**Italian Foreign Minister Tajani on Cooperation with Turkey**  
Host Minister Tajani highlighted that Turkey and Italy are strategic partners, noting that the Turkey-Italy Intergovernmental Summit held in Rome in April demonstrated this partnership. He added that the signing of a cooperation document this evening to strengthen the fight against irregular migration would be highly beneficial in preventing departures from the Mediterranean, especially from Libya. Tajani underlined that irregular



migration is a critical issue for Italy, stating, “Cooperation with a key country like Turkey in the Mediterranean enables us to strengthen our fight against human traffickers. This initiative represents a concrete action by the Italian government to combat irregular migration, drug trafficking, and terrorism in collaboration with a key partner.”

He further explained that both countries will cooperate on law enforcement training. Tajani said, “Our goal is to dismantle criminal networks in the Mediterranean and strengthen cooperation between our coast guards to prevent irregular migration. This topic was also discussed in August in Istanbul between Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Libya’s Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dibeybe, as well as the Interior Ministers of Turkey and Italy. We are therefore working to enhance dialogue between Italy, Turkey, and Libya, and aim to extend this cooperation to other regional actors, as stability in North Africa and the Mediterranean is vital for us.” He added, “The Mediterranean should no longer be a cemetery for migrants; it should serve to promote prosperity and growth.”

**On the Russia-Ukraine War**  
Tajani also addressed the Russia-Ukraine War, stating, “We can work effectively with Turkey to build peace in Ukraine. We are well aware of Ankara’s significant role in facilitating dialogue. I also reiterated to Minister Fidan Italy’s proposal that, once peace is achieved, Ukraine should be provided with a security guarantee modeled on NATO’s Article 5.”

Tajani, taking into account Turkey’s role in the security of the Black Sea, stated that they are also open to discussing the idea of clearing naval mines, saying, “We have a long history and significant experience in this field, and I believe we can work to ensure the safety of maritime transport.”

**Turkey-Italy Economic Relations**  
Tajani emphasized that they see economic relations between the two countries progressing in the right direction:

“We have decided to work harder to strengthen cooperation in this area. In 2024, total trade volume reached 32 billion dollars. Turkey is our largest trade partner in the Mediterranean and the second largest in Europe. Consequently, our exports to Turkey have more than doubled in recent years. Therefore, we are ready to make further investments and, of course, welcome investments into our country as well.”

Tajani also addressed recent defense industry partnerships between the two countries, saying: “We are ready to work together on efforts for peace. I reiterated to the Minister our stance on the defense industry. Our goal is to strengthen our defense sector not only with EU member states but also with countries like the U.S., U.K., and Turkey. We also agreed on reinforcing stability in Syria, Lebanon, and the broader Middle East. We place great trust in Turkey’s role as a friendly country in promoting peace and stability and believe we can take important steps together.”

**“There is a limit to the reaction that must not be crossed. Unfortunately, Israel has crossed this limit.”**  
In response to a question from an AA reporter regarding whether the international community has shown sufficient reaction to Israel’s attack on the Hamas negotiation delegation in Doha, Minister Tajani replied: “We condemn the attacks in Doha because this is a violation of airspace. These attacks violate the airspace of a country that is an important part of the peace negotiations aimed at achieving a ceasefire in Gaza.”

**Tajani added, referring to Israel’s claim to the right of self-defense:**  
“However, there is a limit to the reaction that must not be crossed. Unfortunately, Israel has crossed this limit. International law and humanitarian law rights have been violated many times. We have told Israel that the bombings and attacks must stop and that it is time to reach peace. Of course, Hamas must also immediately and unconditionally release all hostages.”

Tajani reiterated Italy’s belief in a two-state solution, stating: “We believe it is correct to establish a Palestinian State. I also told my Turkish friend and counterpart, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that Italy supports an international mission under the UN, led by a Muslim country, aimed at uniting Gaza and the West Bank for the sake of Palestinian unity. This unification is an essential condition for the establishment of a Palestinian State. We said that we would sign the relevant document being prepared in New York on September 22.” Tajani noted that at the recent informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers, together with Germany, they supported new sanctions against new Israeli illegal settlers who attack Palestinian civilians and occupy parts of the West Bank, adding: “Additionally, we are ready to evaluate the sanctions proposed yesterday in Strasbourg by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and once these proposals are submitted to the Council, we will carry out the necessary evaluations together with our European allies.”



Regarding the question of whether Russian UAVs violating Polish airspace constituted a test for NATO, Tajani responded: “Italy has clearly condemned this. It is evident that Russia wanted to test its intervention capabilities, even militarily. I hope this does not happen again. This is not new. When I was an Air Force officer, we observed Warsaw Pact MiGs approaching NATO borders to test intervention capabilities. This is normal but very worrying. I hope there will be no escalation. Even the slightest mistake could worsen the situation. We must work for peace, but Italy and NATO must defend territorial integrity.”



# “Kyrgyzstan’s Term Presidency of the Organization of Turkic States” Conference Held in Ankara

**Kyrgyzstan’s term presidency of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) was discussed at a conference in Ankara.**

The “Kyrgyzstan’s Term Presidency of the Organization of Turkic States Conference” was held at the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) in Ankara.

The conference, attended by Kyrgyzstan’s Ambassador to Turkey Ruslan Kazakbayev, brought together diplomatic mission representatives, experts, and numerous participants in Ankara.

In his speech, Kazakbayev emphasized that the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) has fully become “an organization with a bright future” both politically and internationally.

Highlighting the importance of cooperation for the organization, Kazakbayev stated that the OTS is united “in a shared enlightened future.” He reminded the audience that the total population of OTS member states is approaching 180 million and provided information on institutions within the organization, including TÜRKSOY, the Turkic Academy, and the Turkic Investment Fund.

Kazakbayev underscored that the Turkic states have come a long way, overcoming numerous obstacles, and stressed the importance of unity for prosperity. He noted that under Kyrgyzstan’s term presidency, the “green agenda” in the Turkic world has been successfully implemented, recalling the Bishkek Declaration signed in November 2024.

Kazakbayev mentioned that Bishkek was declared the digital capital of the Turkic world for 2025, adding that OTS member states have taken steps toward environmental protection, optimization of trade routes, and digitization of transportation procedures. The ambassador stated that Kyrgyzstan’s OTS



term presidency has been carried out in line with the Turkic World 2040 Vision. Ambassador Kazakbayev conveyed that efforts will continue to enhance the OTS’s international reputation and strengthen integration within the Turkic world.

The conference continued with a mutual exchange of ideas and a question-and-answer session.

At the event, former ambassador and AVİM President Alev Kılıç delivered a thank-you speech, and a reciprocal exchange of gifts took place between him and Ambassador Kazakbayev.

The OTS term presidency had passed from Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan in November 2024.

# North Macedonia Celebrates 34 Years of Independence

**North Macedonia, one of the Balkan countries that separated from the former Yugoslavia, is celebrating the 34th anniversary of its independence.**



Following the political crises and conflicts that erupted in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the country, then known simply as Macedonia, held a referendum on September 8, 1991, and declared its independence. 95.3% of the population voted in favor of independence. Soon after, many countries, including Turkey, recognized the decision. After independence, Kiro Gligorov was elected as the country’s first president. In 1992, the country introduced its own currency, the denar, and established its armed forces. In 1993, North Macedonia joined the United Nations, albeit under the name “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” due to objections from Greece.

## Strategic Goals: EU and NATO Membership

Immediately after independence, North Macedonia set European Union (EU) and NATO membership as strategic goals. The country joined NATO in 2020 and continues negotiations for full EU membership.

## The Name Dispute and the Prespa Agreement

The long-standing name dispute with Greece was resolved in June 2018 through the

Prespa Agreement, officially changing the country’s name to “North Macedonia.” In a referendum held the same year, 91.46% of voters supported the change and the country’s EU-NATO aspirations, although voter turnout was below 37%.

EU Accession Negotiations North Macedonia, together with Albania, officially began EU accession negotiations on July 19, 2022. Granted candidate status in 2005, the country must implement constitutional changes required under the protocol signed with Bulgaria. This includes adding the Bulgarian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Slovenian, Jewish, and Egyptian communities to the constitution’s list, which currently recognizes “North Macedonian citizens; Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, Roma, Bosniak” communities.

For this change to take effect, a two-thirds majority (at least 80 out of 120 members) in the parliament is required.

SOURCE: Vedat Kurt





# 44th SCO RATS Council Meeting Held in Kyrgyzstan

Following the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) leaders’ summit, a council meeting to discuss joint steps in counter-terrorism was held in the city of Cholpon-Ata.

Hosted by Kyrgyzstan, the 44th Council Meeting of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) took place at the Presidential Congress Center in Cholpon-Ata, located in the Issyk-Kul Region. After the meeting, General Kamchybek Tashiev, Chairman of Kyrgyzstan’s State Committee for National Security, received SCO RATS members.

Officials from SCO member countries, including China, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran, India, and Pakistan, participated in the meeting held at the Presidential Congress Center in Cholpon-Ata, Issyk-Kul Region.

The meeting was chaired by Kurvanbek Avazov, Deputy Chairman of Kyrgyzstan’s State Committee for National Security. In his speech during the open session, Avazov stated that the meeting would focus on strengthening cooperation mechanisms in combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism. Noting that the Regional Anti-Terrorist Center had carried out intensive activities in these areas last year, Avazov highlighted that relevant agencies of SCO member states had conducted successful operations based on mutual trust and respect. Avazov emphasized that international and regional security faces serious threats due to increasing military-political tensions and the proliferation of hybrid warfare.



mechanisms to counter terrorism, separatism, and extremism threatening the region. He shared that, on Kyrgyzstan’s initiative, decisions were made regarding terrorist group members using SCO borders, the evaluation of electronic evidence, and conducting information operations against terrorist organizations in 2026. Avazov also announced that the chairmanship of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure was handed over to Pakistan. – SCO Counter-Terrorism Meeting Successfully Completed in Kyrgyzstan Meanwhile, General Kamchybek Tashiev, Chairman of Kyrgyzstan’s State Committee for National Security, received the SCO RATS Council members.

Congratulating the successful completion of the meeting under Kyrgyzstan’s chairmanship, Tashiev noted that the meeting was an important step in strengthening security cooperation among SCO member states and reaffirming a shared commitment to combating terrorism, extremism, and separatism. Tashiev stated that, thanks to the stable work of Kyrgyzstan’s intelligence and law enforcement agencies, significant achievements have been accomplished, and organized criminal groups closely connected with international terrorist and extremist networks have been eliminated.

He added that these threats continue to affect regional security, stressing the urgent need to implement effective measures and further develop cooperation mechanisms.

Within the current conditions, Avazov noted that authorized agencies are obliged to take effective steps to detect, prevent, and suppress extremist activities and to enhance cooperation. He stated that during the two sessions held under Kyrgyzstan’s chairmanship, consensus was reached on 47 documents, and that in 22 separate meetings held in groups of seven, 300 different issues were addressed. Avazov also noted that numerous terrorist acts in the SCO region have been prevented in recent years. A series of documents were signed following the meeting.

– Additional Cooperation Mechanisms Developed in Counter-Terrorism Following the meeting, members of the 44th SCO RATS Council posed for a group photo. Avazov emphasized in a press statement that the meeting focused on developing additional cooperation





# 6th Meeting of Religious Affairs and Religious Administration Heads of the Organization of Turkic States Held

Hosted by Kyrgyzstan, the 6th Meeting of Religious Affairs and Religious Administration Heads of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) was held.

The meeting, chaired by Kyrgyzstan's Grand Mufti Abdulaziz Zakirov, took place at the Presidential Congress Center in Bishkek. It was attended by Turkey's President of Religious Affairs Prof. Dr. Ali Erbaş, Chairman of Kazakhstan's Spiritual Administration of Muslims Nauruzbay Taganuly, Chairman of Azerbaijan's Caucasus Muslims Administration Allahshükür Pashazade, and Uzbekistan's Grand Mufti and Chairman of the Muslim Board Nuriddin Haliknazar. The meeting began with a recitation from the Qur'an by Anarbay Kurbanov, imam of Imam Serahsi Mosque—the country's largest mosque, built by Turkey—followed by a prayer from Kyrgyzstan's Grand Mufti.

**“Our Main Agenda is the Unity of Islam and the Ummah”**  
In his speech, Kyrgyzstan's Grand Mufti Zakirov stressed that the main agenda of the gathering of Religious Affairs, Religious Administration Heads, and Muftis from OTS member states was “the unity of Islam and the Ummah.” He noted that families in Muslim-majority societies are facing a series of serious challenges to their religious, traditional, and educational values, and underlined the need for a joint stance on these issues. Zakirov said: “The change in traditional roles of men and women in society, the declining interest of youth in religious

and traditional values, parents spending less time with their children, and the increasing role of technology in child development are leading to divorces, factors harming the parent-child relationship, psychological disorders, and moral deterioration in Muslim societies. We must work on the proposals we will offer to our societies.” He thanked Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov for his great importance to Turkic unity and his support for all the activities of the Organization of Turkic States.

**“The Liberation of Many Islamic Lands Depends on Reviving the Consciousness of the Ummah”**  
In his speech, Turkey's President of Religious Affairs Prof. Dr. Ali Erbaş emphasized that almost all the main works regarded as Islamic sources after the Qur'an were written by scholars from the geography of the Turkic republics. Erbaş said: “Humanity is going through a deep crisis of meaning and values. Seditions caused by racism, sectarianism, and ideological partisanship have surrounded the Islamic world. Geographical fragmentation has brought mental disarray. As a result of this disarray, the Islamic world, which has lost its power and grandeur, struggles to defend itself militarily, politically, and culturally against imperialist interventions and challenges.”

Pointing to the importance of unity in the Muslim world, he said: “We need unity to sustain our existence as an



Ummah. We need it to escape the hegemony of global exploitation systems. We need it for the freedom of Palestine, Jerusalem, and Gaza. We must achieve this. The liberation of many Islamic lands turned into homes of blood and tears such as Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Arakan, East Turkistan, and Yemen depends on reviving the consciousness of the Ummah. For this, we need unity, togetherness, and solidarity.”

**“The Peoples of the OTS Member States Have Always Been Loyal to Their Sacred Religion and National Values”**  
Chairman of Azerbaijan's Caucasus Muslims Administration Pashazade stated in his speech: “The peoples of the OTS member states have always been loyal to our sacred religion, our Turkic identity, and our national values, and have been proud of this.” He recalled that the Council of Religious Affairs and Religious Administration Heads of the OTS was established with the “prayers” of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, saying: “Under the leadership of Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, the Kyrgyz state is embracing its religious and moral values. As religious leaders of the Turkic world, we express our collective support for these initiatives. We pray to Almighty Allah.”

**“I Believe Today's Meeting Will Strengthen the Unity of Countries**



**Sharing Common Roots and History”**  
Chairman of Kazakhstan's Spiritual Administration of Muslims Taganuly underlined the importance of the final declaration adopted at the 5th Meeting of the OTS Religious Affairs and Religious Administration Heads held in Astana last year.

**“I believe today's meeting will strengthen the unity of countries sharing common roots and history,” he said.**  
Taganuly stressed that strengthening the spiritual unity of Turkic peoples is everyone's common duty. “We need each other. We must always stand by each other. Today's meeting is proof of that,” he added. During the meeting, Taganuly presented participants with the book “Fatwas” prepared by Kazakhstan's Spiritual Administration of Muslims. “The Organization Is Building a Solid Foundation for Future Generations” Uzbekistan's Grand Mufti and Chairman of the Muslim Board Haliknazar said the OTS continuously develops its activities and strengthens its position on the international stage: “The organization is of vital importance not only in terms of regional stability and development but also in creating a solid foundation for future generations.”

Noting the growing friendship and cooperation among the peoples of OTS member states, Haliknazar said: “Thanks to the efforts of our state leaders, the organization is taking bold steps to strengthen the unity of Turkic peoples, protect common interests, and respond to events in the Islamic world.” In his speech, Haliknazar emphasized the importance of fatwas to address family issues and pointed to climate change, forest fires, water scarcity, desertification, and environmental problems faced by the Turkic world.







The First Meeting Was Held in Istanbul in 2022

OTS Secretary-General Kubanychbek Omuraliev recalled that the first meeting of Religious Affairs and Religious Administration Heads of the OTS Member States was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2022, followed by meetings in Turkistan (Kazakhstan), Baku (Azerbaijan), Shusha (Azerbaijan), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Astana (Kazakhstan), and now Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). He thanked Kyrgyzstan’s Grand Mufti Zakirov for organizing the event.

Omuraliev stated that at every meeting, common decisions were reaffirmed on protecting and promoting Turkic-Islamic values, combating Islamophobia and radicalism, and strengthening cooperation between religious institutions.

Religious Leaders Call for Solutions to Ecological Problems

At the meeting, where the final declaration of the 6th Meeting of Religious Affairs and Religious Administration Heads of the OTS was adopted, the fatwas approved by the Fatwa Council were also confirmed. With Uzbekistan’s proposal, a call was made to find solutions to climate change, environmental protection, and ecological problems. It was announced that the next meeting will be held in Azerbaijan.

Following the meeting, a conference on “Imam Sirajuddin Al-Osh’s Contribution to Islam” was held, and various books were distributed by Kyrgyzstan’s Muftiate.

President Japarov Received the Religious Leaders of the OTS Member States

According to the Kyrgyz Presidential Press Center, Japarov received the delegation of religious leaders attending the 6th Meeting of Religious Affairs and



Religious Administration Heads of the OTS at the Presidential Palace.

The meeting was attended by Kyrgyzstan’s Grand Mufti Abdulaziz Zakirov, Turkey’s President of Religious Affairs Prof. Dr. Ali Erbaş, Chairman of Kazakhstan’s Spiritual Administration of Muslims Nauruzbay Taganuly, Chairman of Azerbaijan’s Caucasus Muslims Administration Allahshükür Pashazade, Uzbekistan’s Grand Mufti and Chairman of the Muslim Board Nuriddin Haliknazar, and OTS Secretary-General Kubanychbek Omuraliev.

In his speech at the meeting, President Japarov stressed the special importance of such gatherings of religious leaders for strengthening spiritual unity among Turkic states and developing relations of brotherhood and friendship.

“We must direct our efforts so that the values of Islam—the religion of faith and morality, unity and solidarity—integrate with the national traditions and cultural heritage of the Turkic world and serve the bright future of our peoples,” Japarov said, emphasizing that one of the most important areas of cooperation within the OTS is interaction in the field of religion.

Recalling that Kyrgyzstan is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country where 90% of the population is Muslim, Japarov stated:

“In this context, a number of reforms have been carried out in the field of religion in Kyrgyzstan in recent years. This year, the State Commission for Religious Affairs was transformed into the National Agency for Religious Affairs and Interethnic Relations under the President and placed under my personal supervision. In addition, an Islamic Academy will be opened in the city of Tokmok to improve the level of religious literacy in the country.”

During the meeting, President Japarov awarded Kyrgyzstan’s Muftiate the “Ayköl” (Generous/Noble) Order for its significant contribution to strengthening cultural ties among Turkic states and supporting the development of spiritual values.

# President Tokayev Announces Kazakhstan’s Vision for a Digital Future



## Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in his traditional State of the Nation address, unveiled a comprehensive reform program titled “Kazakhstan in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Key Tasks and Solutions Through Digital Transformation.” In his speech, the President presented an ambitious vision encompassing digital transformation, investment modernization, global connectivity, and institutional renewal.

At the heart of his address was Kazakhstan’s determination to become a leader in the age of artificial intelligence. Tokayev announced the establishment of a Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development.

This new institution, to be headed by an expert at the Deputy Prime Minister level, will aim to transform Kazakhstan into a fully digital country within three years. He also instructed the rapid adoption of a Digital Law covering artificial intelligence, big data, and the platform economy.

The President also addressed financial innovations, announcing the creation of a State Digital Assets Fund to establish a strategic crypto reserve and the adoption of a new Banking Law by the end of the year to strengthen the fintech sector. Tokayev stressed that excessive bureaucracy in the investment system undermines efficiency and emphasized the need to develop a new investment attraction model.

In this context, he said a Regional Investment Attractiveness Index would be created and that the Prime Minister would personally oversee the process. Significant projects were also announced in the field of transportation and logistics. Tokayev noted that the Dostyk–Mointy double-track railway, a strategic part of the East–West corridor, is nearing completion. He instructed that by October, the Smart Cargo Digital Customs and Logistics Platform—ensuring equal access for the private sector—be implemented. He also announced the establishment of a

national cargo airline as part of Kazakhstan’s goal to become Eurasia’s leading air transport hub.

In foreign policy, Tokayev reiterated Kazakhstan’s multi-vector diplomacy approach, expressing satisfaction with positive developments in U.S.–Russia talks and the Azerbaijan–Armenia peace process.

He highlighted the importance of cooperation with China, Turkey, Central Asian countries, the European Union, and the United States. He also reiterated his call for reform of the UN Security Council, stating that Kazakhstan’s views on the matter would be presented at the UN General Assembly.

Tokayev also proposed a transition to a unicameral parliament to be submitted to a referendum in 2027. He emphasized that this process should be transparent and based on consultation.

National priorities also included granting special status to Alatau City, adopting a new Urban Development Law by the end of the year, creating a digital land resource map, and implementing food security and water management strategies, as well as restoring the Aral Sea and protecting the Caspian Sea.

In the context of social policies, Tokayev announced steps to reform the social assistance system, strengthen pensions, expand healthcare services, and improve financial literacy.

He also unveiled programs to integrate artificial intelligence into school curricula and to expand digital education in rural areas to prepare the younger generation for the AI era.

At the conclusion of his speech, President Tokayev emphasized that the principles of law, order, and patriotism will guide Kazakhstan through the process of global change:

“As long as our people are united and maintain internal stability, we will overcome all difficulties and successfully pass every test.”



# Tashkent Breaking Records in Investment and Exports: New Moves from Uzbekistan's Leader

**Uzbekistan's Tashkent region is experiencing an economic breakthrough with billions of dollars in investments and record export figures. The newly launched projects and employment targets are turning the region into the country's growth engine.**

Uzbekistan's Tashkent region has achieved remarkable success in recent years in attracting investment and increasing its export capacity. According to reports presented to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan, over the past eight

years, the region has received \$10 billion in regional and \$8 billion in sectoral investments. Thanks to these investments, about one thousand new industrial, commercial, and service enterprises have been established.

## Rising Exports and Growing Companies

Over the past three years, the number of enterprises with an annual turnover exceeding 10 billion Uzbek soums (USD 800,000) has increased 1.8 times, reaching 1,700. The number of companies with a turnover of more than 100 billion Uzbek soums (USD 8 million) rose from 137 to 193. This growth has also propelled Tashkent



region's exports to record levels. Previously, the region's annual exports had not even reached USD 1 billion, but this year it has surpassed that threshold.

## Major Projects and Employment Targets

In the region, large industrial parks worth USD 2.1 billion are being established with the support of foreign investors. At the instruction of Mirziyoyev, a new program with a budget of 40 trillion Uzbek soums

(USD 3.2 billion) for 2025–2027 has been launched. These plans aim to reduce unemployment and poverty rates to 4.5 percent by the end of the year. As part of this, two new transformer substations will be built in the cities of Nurafshan, Almalyk, and Chirchik to support foreign-invested industrial enterprises. In Bekabad, production of import-substituting automobile parts will be launched, while food and textile factories will be established in Akkurgan. Along the Karasu Canal, tourist and shopping complexes will also be developed.

In total, a USD 2.5 billion investment project has been designed for the region. These projects aim to provide employment for more than 11,000 people and create an additional export potential of USD 434 million. President Mirziyoyev has instructed that all available resources be mobilized to create neighborhoods free of poverty and unemployment.

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# Montenegro President Milatovic Emphasizes Raising Dialogue with Turkey to “Strategic Level”

Montenegro’s President Jakov Milatovic, visiting Turkey, stated that they aim to elevate the political dialogue between Podgorica and Ankara to a strategic level.

Speaking on his visit to Istanbul for Montenegro’s National Day, Milatovic expressed his pleasure at being in Turkey. He also said he was particularly happy to meet with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, adding: “(Fidan) also attended Montenegro’s National Day. We are very grateful for this gesture. I believe it is also a sign of Turkey’s sincere friendship with Montenegro. This continues a series of steps both countries have taken so far.”

Before the Montenegro National Day reception, Milatovic held a bilateral meeting with Minister Fidan, noting that they discussed many topics, particularly how political dialogue between the two countries could be further developed. Milatovic stated that during the meeting with Fidan, they reviewed all possible ways to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries.

Highlighting that Turkey and Montenegro are two friendly and allied countries, Milatovic emphasized that with political dialogue and economic cooperation, the countries are important strategic partners. He added that this “demonstrates how crucial it is to strengthen partnerships in an increasingly uncertain global environment,” and said, “Therefore, partnership with Turkey is very important to us.”



**Strategic Partnership Accord to Establish “High-Level Political Dialogue Council”**

Recalling his visit to Turkey last year when he met with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Milatovic described the upcoming visit as a great opportunity to sign a “strategic partnership accord” between the two countries. He noted that this represents “the highest



level both sides want to achieve,” adding: “I hope that following the signing of this accord, when Montenegro’s Prime Minister (Milojko Spajic) comes to Turkey on behalf of the Montenegrin government, we will establish a joint body, a high-level political dialogue council. This will serve as a major platform to discuss many issues and implement many important cooperation opportunities between the two countries. This is another indication of both sides’ desire to establish a strategic-level relationship between our countries.”

Regarding the positive impacts of the accord, Milatovic said that the planned agreement “essentially reflects both sides’ desire to elevate political dialogue to a strategic level.”

**“Turkey is an Important Economic Partner for Montenegro”**

Milatovic spoke about trade volume and targets between the two countries: “Turkey is an important economic partner for Montenegro. So far, we have developed an annual trade volume of around 200 million euros. Our target is to increase bilateral trade to half a billion euros over the next few years. Considering Montenegro’s size, this is an ambitious goal, but I believe it is achievable and will benefit both economies.”

Milatovic noted that Turkey has major investments in Montenegro, stating: “In recent years, Turkey has been the second-largest investor in Montenegro, and I believe it has now become the top investor this year.”

**President Erdoğan’s Visit to Montenegro Will Be Another Turning Point**

Milatovic emphasized that there are many areas for economic cooperation between the two countries and expressed anticipation for President Erdoğan’s visit to Montenegro, hoping it will take place next year.

He noted that 2026 will mark the 20th anniversary of Montenegro’s regained independence, making it an important year, and said: “I believe President Erdoğan’s visit will be another milestone in strengthening bilateral ties.”

**“No Limits to Economic Cooperation Between Montenegro and Turkey”**

Milatovic stressed that Montenegro is an important destination for many Turkish companies, with tens of thousands operating across various sectors. He added: “Montenegro is clearly on the radar of Turkish companies, which I believe is a strong sign that economic ties between our countries will further strengthen.”

Milatovic also mentioned Montenegro’s large investment cycle in infrastructure, roads, railways, and highways, noting that many Turkish companies are involved in transport and energy, particularly renewable energy.

Highlighting ongoing government discussions, he said: “A major infrastructure project in Montenegro connects the country to Serbia and Central Europe. According to my information, several Turkish companies applied to the public tender opened on behalf of the Montenegrin government. So there is significant interest.”

**Milatovic added that he is pleased to see Turkey becoming a major foreign investor in Montenegro.**

Regarding air connectivity, Milatovic noted the excellent airline connections between the two countries via Turkish Airlines (THY) and Air Montenegro: “We see an increase in Turkish tourists visiting Montenegro and Montenegrin tourists coming to Turkey. I believe tourism cooperation is another avenue for economic collaboration. There is a saying: ‘The sky is the limit.’ In economic cooperation between Montenegro and Turkey, I truly believe the only limit is the sky.”

**Montenegrin Diaspora in Turkey: A Natural Bridge**

Milatovic noted a large Montenegrin diaspora in Turkey: “Currently, around 300,000 people of Montenegrin origin, of course as Turkish citizens, are estimated to live in Turkey, mostly in Istanbul.” He said: “I believe the Montenegrin diaspora in Turkey, and the Balkan diaspora more broadly, serves as an important natural bridge between our

countries.” Many Montenegrin-origin individuals have become successful businesspeople, with some involved in Turkish politics, strengthening political and economic ties.

Milatovic also highlighted that many in the diaspora have families in Montenegro, sending part of their income home, saying: “There is a lot of people-to-people connection, which I believe forms the foundation of our strategic partnership—trust, mutual respect, and partnership.”

He added that seeing prominent diaspora leaders at the Montenegro National Day reception made him very happy.

**“We View Turkey’s Role in the Geopolitical Environment as Constructive”**

On Turkey’s role in resolving global conflicts, Milatovic said: “In this increasingly uncertain geopolitical environment, we view Turkey’s role in Montenegro as very constructive. This is not just our perception in Montenegro, but I believe it is the sincere view of nearly all countries in the Western Balkans.”

Milatovic also highlighted that both Montenegro and Turkey are NATO allies, another indication of their close cooperation.

**“Our Goal is EU Membership by 2028”**

Regarding EU membership, Milatovic said: “Montenegro is currently the most advanced among candidate countries in joining the EU. We hope to become the EU’s next member in the coming years. Our goal is to be an EU member by 2028, which I believe is an important avenue for cooperation with Turkey through the EU.”

He added: “Everything happening on the global stage shows that the EU and Turkey need to cooperate even more closely.” Milatovic described the Middle East as “a very challenging region,” noting Turkey’s role as “a key supporter of stability in the region” is highly appreciated.

Milatovic also emphasized that Montenegro and Turkey share the vision that the UN system should be restructured to reflect current global realities.

He referred to two major crises in Europe’s neighborhood—Ukraine and Gaza—and noted that Montenegro shares some common perspectives with Turkey on these issues.

Milatovic concluded by saying that NATO is one of the three pillars of Montenegro’s foreign policy: “Both Montenegro and Turkey are seen as constructive actors in regional stability.” He stressed their commitment to multilateralism: “We are all part of this one world. We want it to address humanitarian crises and climate change effectively, and this is an approach we share with Turkey.”



# Kazakhstan’s Nuclear Move: Moscow and Beijing in the Shadow of Energy Ambitions

Kazakhstan’s President Tokayev stated that the first nuclear power plant under construction will be insufficient to meet the country’s growing energy needs, emphasizing that “planning for second and third plants is mandatory.”



President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in his address to the nation, announced that the country is entering a period of profound transformation in its energy strategy. However, the architects of this transformation include Russia’s state nuclear company Rosatom and China’s energy giants. Tokayev noted that the first nuclear plant being built in cooperation with Rosatom will not be enough to satisfy Kazakhstan’s rising energy demand, making the planning of second and third plants “essential.”

## The Risks of Russia and China in Energy Strategy

Tokayev’s statement has revived concerns that under the guise of energy security, Kazakhstan may be drawn into deeper technical and economic dependencies on Moscow and Beijing. Rosatom’s official designation as the contractor in the summer of 2025 strengthens Russia’s strategic influence in the region, while nuclear cooperation with China carries the risk that Kazakhstan could become increasingly reliant on China’s economic leverage.

Meanwhile, in line with the goal of

making Turkistan an energy and technology hub, Kazakhstan plans to integrate 6.3 GW of renewable energy into the system within five years. Nevertheless, Tokayev stressed that coal remains a “strategic resource” for the country.

In the 2024 referendum, 71 percent of the public expressed support for nuclear projects, providing a legitimacy framework for this strategy. However, experts question whether the public was sufficiently informed. Past safety scandals involving Rosatom and frequent transparency issues in Chinese infrastructure projects add not only technical but also political risks to Kazakhstan’s energy future. Astana’s energy diplomacy is thus becoming a space where not only electricity generation but also geopolitical orientations are being redefined.



# President of Turkmenistan Invites SCO Members to the Trans-Caspian Route



President Serdar Berdimuhamedov emphasized the strategic importance of the Trans-Caspian and Caspian corridors, noting that they provide economic opportunities, enhance efficiency, and offer full access to global markets for SCO member states.

Turkmenistan’s Head of State, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, highlighted the significance of the Trans-Caspian and Caspian corridors during his speech at the “Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Plus” event in China.

Berdimuhamedov stated that these corridors represent a strategic route offering economic opportunities, increased efficiency, and full access to world markets for SCO member countries.

In his address, the President noted that the favorable political and legal environment in the Caspian Sea creates positive prospects for SCO countries to participate in regional trade activities. He also recalled that the topic was discussed in detail at the recently

held UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Turkmenistan and thanked SCO members for their participation in the forum.

**Emphasis on Turkmenbashi Port**  
President Berdimuhamedov particularly highlighted the capabilities of the Turkmenbashi International Sea Port. He stressed that this multifunctional port is ready for practical dialogue to be used in line with the interests of the SCO.

The Turkmen leader underlined that his country is open to close cooperation with all parties, including SCO member states, to maximize the potential of the North-South and East-West corridors. This statement underscores Turkmenistan’s goal of making the Caspian corridor a key part of global trade.



# Martyr Captain Cengiz Topel Mediterranean Storm-2025 Exercise Held in Sadrazamköy

**The “Martyr Captain Cengiz Topel Mediterranean Storm-2025 Exercise,” conducted with the participation of the land, air, and naval elements of the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command and the Security Forces Command, included the organization of a “Distinguished Observer Day.”**



The “Distinguished Observer Day” was held at the Sadrazamköy Firing and Exercise Area. The exercise was observed by President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Ersin Tatar, Turkey’s Ambassador to Nicosia Ali Murat Başçeri, Commander of the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command (CTPFC) Lieutenant General Sebahattin Kılınç, Commander of the Security Forces Command (SFC) Major General İlker Görgülü, Major General Nurettin Hakan Büyükcülha from Turkey’s Special Forces Command, Brigadier General Serdar Konak from the Land Forces Command, Brigadier General Samet Yüksel from the Air Forces Command, Rear Admiral Soner Kazankaya from the Naval Forces Command, Major General İlker Ertuğrul, Commander of the 28th Mechanized Infantry Division, Brigadier General Ahmet Burak Yürüten, Commander of the 39th Mechanized Infantry Division, Brigadier General Uğur Bor, Commander of the 14th Armored Brigade, and Deputy Commander of the SFC Brigadier General Mehmet Ali Akbaş, as well as many military officials and members of the press.

The exercise began with President Tatar being received by commando units and a speech by Lieutenant General Sebahattin Kılınç, Commander of the CTPFC.

Lieutenant General Kılınç stated that the Martyr Captain Cengiz Topel Mediterranean Storm Exercise—conducted with the participation of the Turkish Armed Forces’ land, sea, and air forces, together with the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces and Security Forces Command—aimed to achieve the highest level of capability in carrying out planned tasks effectively. Kılınç noted that the purpose of the

exercise was to develop the ability of CTPFC units to plan and conduct offensive operations, air assault operations, airborne operations, and combat and search-and-rescue operations simultaneously. He emphasized that they were prepared to fulfill every task assigned in an effective, deterrent, and respected manner within this scope. He stated that in a period of intensified regional and global developments marked by uncertainty and instability, the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command continued its training, exercises, and firing activities in order to respond to emerging situations and fulfill its assigned duties. Kılınç added that the Turkish Armed Forces continue to protect the rights and interests of Turkey and the TRNC in the Eastern Mediterranean and remain the guarantor of peace and security on the island of Cyprus in line with international guarantee and alliance agreements.

**“If I stay, I’m a veteran; if I die, I’m a martyr” mindset**

“The heroic and self-sacrificing members of the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command, which bases its work on the fulfillment of duty and maintains

an offensive spirit, stand against all attempts that may harm national rights and interests with the understanding of ‘if I stay, I’m a veteran; if I die, I’m a martyr,’” Kılınç said, adding that the exercise conducted during the Century of Türkiye demonstrates to the world’s armies the level reached together with naval and air elements.

Kılınç continued: “On the occasion of this exercise, I commemorate with mercy Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his comrades-in-arms, Martyr Captain Cengiz Topel who was martyred on 8 August 1964, all our martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the security of the homeland during the 1974 Peace Operation, our heroic veterans who passed away, with gratitude, and our living veterans with appreciation.” Following Lieutenant General Kılınç’s speech, participants were briefed and the live portion of the exercise was carried out.

First conducted in 2019 and organized for the seventh time this year, the exercise was held in memory of Martyr Pilot Captain Cengiz Topel. Planned at the operational level as a combined, joint, live-fire exercise, it included battalion task force drills



involving infiltration, air assault, airborne, assembly, combat, and search-and-rescue operations.

The exercise also featured the use of a G-Class Frigate, a Kılıç-II Class Fast Attack Craft, an ATS-Class Tugboat, four F-16 fighter jets, a CN-235 (CASA) transport aircraft, T-129 Atak helicopters, T-70 Sikorsky helicopters, AS-532 Cougar helicopters, Bayraktar TB2 and Anka UAVs/armed UAVs, and M48 A5T2 tanks.

The exercise was managed by the Land Forces Command, controlled by the CTPFC, and executed by the 39th Mechanized Infantry Division Command.

**Commandos presented their flags to President Tatar**

After the live portion of the exercise, paratroopers jumped with Turkish and TRNC flags. A commando team arriving at the viewing area by helicopter presented the flags they carried to President Tatar. Afterwards, naval and air elements performed a ceremonial parade.

The program concluded with President Tatar presenting awards to the personnel who successfully carried out the exercise and the protocol touring the area where the weapons used were exhibited.





# Energy Cooperation Strengthens in the Turkic World

A trilateral meeting on energy and water management was held between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. As a result of the talks, a series of protocols were signed regarding water release from the Toktogul Dam, electricity supply, and energy transit.



Cooperation among the countries of the Turkic world continues to grow. On September 7, 2025, the energy and water management authorities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan held a trilateral meeting in the Kyrgyz city of Cholpon-Ata. Following the discussions, a set of protocols was signed to regulate the region's water-energy balance.

According to a statement from the Kazakh Ministry of Energy, the agreements define the responsibilities of the parties regarding water release from the Toktogul Dam. Under the protocols, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan will supply electricity to Kyrgyzstan, and conditions were established for the transit of electricity sent from Russia to Kyrgyzstan via Kazakhstan. The statement noted that these steps will help maintain water levels at the dam

and support the irrigation needs of southern Kazakhstan during the farming season.

Kazakhstan's Energy Minister Yerlan Akkenjenov emphasized that the protocols contain "specific figures, timelines, and prices," and stressed that strict implementation of the program is critical for ensuring stability in electricity supply and water resource management.

**Electricity Supply from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan**  
Bilateral talks were also held during the meeting. As part of these discussions, a protocol was signed under which Uzbekistan will supply approximately 900 million kWh of electricity to Kazakhstan between March and December 2026. The agreement aims to prevent potential electricity shortages during maintenance work at power plants in southern Kazakhstan.

# Hops: The Hidden Key to Sleep and Serenity

My dear readers,  
Today I would like to tell you about a plant whose name is mostly associated with beer brewing, but which actually holds a very special place in the world of healing: hops (*Humulus lupulus*).

Hops are known for their vine-like stems and green cone-shaped flowers. Inside those cones lie essential oils, resins, and flavonoids that give the plant both its aroma and its healing properties. Compounds such as humulone, lupulone and xanthohumol in particular elevate hops far beyond an ordinary plant. Support for the nervous system and sleep: Hops are a natural aid that calms the nerves and soothes the mind. They are one of the most well-known plants for people who suffer from insomnia. A cup of hops tea prepared before bedtime invites sleep without making the mind feel heavy. It eases nervous tension and turns restlessness into calm.

Effects on the digestive system:  
It is also traditionally used as an appetite stimulant and stomach soother. Its mildly bitter taste stimulates digestion and relaxes the stomach. Especially low-dose teas prepared before meals support the digestive system.

Hormonal balance:  
Another prominent feature of hops is its content of plant-based estrogens. Thanks to this, it can help with complaints such as hot flashes, tension, and insomnia experienced by women during



menopause. When used regularly and in moderation, it plays a balancing role. Immunity and cell health: The antioxidants it contains protect the body from free radicals and contribute to cell renewal. Xanthohumol in particular stands out for its anti-inflammatory effect.

- Traditional ways of use:**
- The cones are dried and brewed as a tea.
  - They are placed inside pillows to help induce sleep.
  - In some regions, boiled hops are used to rinse hair and soothe the scalp.
  - In beer making, they add both aroma and preservative qualities.

My dear readers,  
Although hops are associated in many people's minds only with beer, they are in fact the plant of sleep and serenity. They relax the mind, soothe the stomach, and help balance hormones. The healing contained within their little green cones reminds us once again how generous nature truly is.







*Hasan YİĞİT*

## Time Rising with the Voice of the People: The Silent Echo of Modern Democracy

When a human being is first born, breathing alone is not enough. They wish to express themselves, to be heard, to feel that they matter. Sometimes this happens through a glance, sometimes through a word. Within a society, this search grows, expands, and spreads. When the voices rising from individuals can unite on a common ground, that is when the first steps of democracy are taken. Because democracy is not only a system of government; it is an understanding that values human existence and places it at the center.

Modern democracy is an intention beyond words. On the surface there are ballot boxes, votes, elections, majority decisions. But when you go deeper, something else emerges: the will of a society to shape its own destiny together. This will is formed not only through written laws, but also through the desire to live together, respect for rights, tolerance for thought, and a sense of equality. Today's democracy is a child born of centuries of struggle — filtered through the shadows of monarchies, the noise of tyrants, and the whispers of silenced peoples. But it is no longer a cry. It is more a quietness rising from within. A harmony in which everyone can speak at once but no one drowns out the other.

In modern democracy, the individual is not a number but a story. Behind the hand casting a vote there is a past, a hope, a quest. Each vote cast is not only a choice but also a reminder: “I am here.” This is the foundation of modern democracy, which sees the public not merely as a mass to be ruled but as a mind participating in governance.

This form of government is based not on concentrating power in a single hand but on dispersing it. Legislative, executive, judiciary... each separate yet in harmony. Power, when shared, finds its balance. And balance is the precondition of justice. Modern democracy does not only set rules to preserve this balance but also builds a culture. Over time, society discovers its own inner voice — learns to trust a newspaper that tells the truth, a parliament that listens to the people, an honest judiciary.

Yet democracy lives not only through institutions but through individuals. A society's democratic character lies not only in holding regular elections but also in how its members look at and speak to one another. True democracy means not seeing someone with a different view as an enemy, but accepting that one can also learn from that view. Every individual in a modern democracy is equally valuable, regardless of wealth, language, faith, or lifestyle. On the ballot, all are equal. This sense of equality creates trust. Where there is trust, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is productivity, progress, and development.

But modern democracy is not an easy system. It requires patience, tolerance, maturity. Sometimes the decision of the majority can hurt the minority. Sometimes wrong choices can delay the right ones. Yet everyone knows this system is the path to correction, change, and rebuilding. Even the worst decision, if taken together, can be repaired.

Democracy does not only grant rights to the individual; it also imposes responsibilities. Voting is a right, but also a duty. Criticizing is a right, but producing solutions is a virtue. A society sustains democracy not only with demands but also with contributions. It matures not only by asking but also by giving.

Modern democracy sanctifies freedom of expression. Because without freedom of thought, truth does not emerge. If an individual can speak, write, criticize, and think without fear... that is where the voice of democracy can be heard. Sometimes that voice is loud, sometimes low — but its very existence is a sign of society's health. This system also counsels not to forget but to remember. One must remember past mistakes to learn from them and not repeat them. For this reason, democratic societies are at peace with their history. Societies that can acknowledge and confront their own wrongs deepen their democracy.

Modern democracy is not merely a form of state but a philosophy of life.

It is a consciousness that starts at home, develops at school, and grows in the street. A family that allows its child a say, a student who can criticize their teacher, an employee who can claim their rights — these are the lifeblood of democracy. If these veins become blocked, the system falters. The media is the mirror of democracy. If it is free, society can see itself. If it is impartial, everyone can find a piece of themselves in it. Censorship silences not only a word but a nation. Because truth unheard leads people astray. This is why one of the most protected rights in democracies is the right to receive information.

Modern democracy also encourages change. The ability of individuals to influence their own destiny drives societal dynamism. No leader is eternal. There is the ballot box — not merely a box but a contract. The people say: “I have given you this power, but I will take it back if needed.” This contract gives democracy both strength and measure.

At times, the system is criticized. It works slowly, debates drag on, decisions are delayed. Yet this delay is, in a sense, healthy — because everyone has a say and every idea is heard. History has paid the price of hasty decisions many times. Democracy is like a patient architect, laying each stone carefully in place.

But there are dangers too: populism, misinformation, polarization. These can hollow out democracy. Leaders who claim to represent the people yet do not listen to them turn democracy into a caricature. That is why checks and balances must always be strong — judicial independence, press freedom, a vibrant civil society. These are democracy's safeguards.

In modern democracy, opposition is not an enemy but a necessity — not only to correct the government's mistakes but also to voice the society's different perspectives. A strong opposition is a strong democracy. Because majority decisions can only be tested for correctness through counter voices.

Democracy is not simply “whatever the majority says.” The rights, beliefs, and lifestyles of minorities are also protected. Otherwise, majority rule turns into majority tyranny — a different form of oppression, not democracy. True democracy is a system where every individual feels equal, valued, and safe.

In the modern world, democracies face new tests through technological transformation. Digitalization, social media, artificial intelligence — these create both opportunities and threats. Information spreads quickly, but so does misinformation. In such an environment, it becomes even more important for individuals to be conscious, to distinguish truth from falsehood, and to think critically. Education is the foundation of democracy. Not merely literate but thoughtful, questioning, debating individuals are needed. Democratic societies reproduce themselves through education, passing this culture to each new generation. Otherwise, a society of people who vote but do not know what they are voting for may appear democratic but in reality be directionless.

Modern democracy is not a gift but the result of struggle. Wanting it is not enough; it must be nurtured. It must be recreated every day — otherwise it quietly disappears. Because democracy collapses most when it is not defended.

Ultimately, modern democracy is the institutional name of humanity's desire to take its fate into its own hands. It is the system of those who want to make their voice heard, to take part in governance, to be not mere spectators but actors. And this system is not only the product of a single country but of a human ideal.

It grows with individuals who place not only a stamp but a lifetime's worth of meaning on a ballot paper. These individuals may think and feel differently. But their common ground is the will to protect this system. Democracy is not where differences fight but where they converse. And conversation is the breath of a nation. Modern democracy is the rhythm of that breath.





# ULUSLARARASI SİVİL DİPLOMASİ GAZETESİ

September / 2025  
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