



Joint Press Release

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EUROCHAMBRES and TOBB launch new programme to promote constructive economic dialogue between Turkey and the EU

EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, is launching a new programme called “Turkey – EU Business Dialogue (TEBD)” to promote the integration of EU and Turkish business communities and ensure a stronger awareness of the business opportunities between Turkey and the European Union.

The announcement was made by **Christoph Leidl**, President of EUROCHAMBRES, and **Rifat Hisarciklioğlu**, President of the Union of Turkish Chambers (TOBB) and Vice President of EUROCHAMBRES, this morning in Istanbul.

Christoph Leidl, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: “*Considering today’s complex relationship between EU and Turkey, this new initiative is more necessary than ever. At a time when political dialogue is difficult, economic dialogue and cooperation can be the bridge that connects EU and Turkey. This is the importance of our new project TEBD*”.

Rifat Hisarciklioğlu, President of the Union of Turkish Chambers (TOBB) and Vice President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: “*This new programme illustrates our shared ambition to strengthen EU-Turkey business relations in a practical manner. We want to focus on economic development and cooperation for the benefit of our Turkish and EU business members.*”

The objective of the TEBD programme is to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between the Turkish and the European private sectors. During the next 30 months, European and Turkish Chambers of Commerce and Industry will engage in over 100 activities, including Chamber twinings, capacity building, company surveys, and more.

EUROCHAMBRES will manage the TEBD project in close cooperation of TOBB, with a total budget of € 5 million. The project is funded by the European Union IPA II programme, and contracted through the CFCU in Ankara.

This project follows the successful completion of the previous projects, as the EU-Turkey Chambers Forum – ETCF (2007-2013) and Turkish Chambers Development Programme – TCDP (2001-2005).

Trade relations between the EU and Turkey

The European Union is Turkey’s main trading partner. In 2017, 44.5% of Turkey’s exports went to EU Member States and 38% of imports to Turkey came from the European Union. Total EU-Turkey trade (in goods) is around €150 billion per year (2017). 75% of foreign investment in Turkey comes from the EU and more than 20,000 EU companies are established in Turkey.

The EU and Turkey are linked by a Customs Union agreement, which came into force on 31 December 1995.

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