

PRESS RELEASE

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JOINT POSITION PAPER PUBLISHED FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE CUSTOMS UNION

German-Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AHK Turkey) highlighted the importance of the Customs Union in a joint initiative between TOBB, TEPAV and the Bilateral European Chambers.

Today there has been a digital event about the modernization of the Customs Union organised by AHK Turkey and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Turkey. The opening remarks of the event were made by Dr. Markus C. Slevogt - President of AHK Turkey, Walter Glos - Director of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Turkey and Ayhan Zeytinoğlu - Vice President of TOBB.

Following the keynote speakers H.E. Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut - Ambassador, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Turkey and H.E. Jürgen Schulz - Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany and Jane Grady - Deputy Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner; Sibel Güven – Program Director from TEPAV made an introduction of the Customs Union Position Paper.

Levent Apaydın - President of Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Turkey, Georg Karabaczek - Austrian Trade Commissioner for Turkey, Georgia & Azerbaijan, Livio Manzini – President of Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Turkey, Zeynep Necipoğlu - President of French Chamber of Commerce in Turkey, Chris Gaunt, OBE - President of British Chamber of Commerce in Turkey, Arpat Şenocak - President of Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and Gregor Van Der

Mark - President of Dutch Business Association Turkey attended also the discussion session of the event.

The coordinators of the joint initiative announced: „For the past 25 years, Turkey and the European Union have facilitated trade relations through a Customs Union and since then the Customs Union has served as main pillar enhancing trade, investments and further customs reforms. Hence, AHK Turkey in a joint initiative between TOBB, TEPAV and the Bilateral European Chambers highlighted the importance of the Customs Union from a business perspective by facilitating this position paper. We outlined the achievements of the Customs Union and its positive effects on bilateral economic relations. Moreover, we stressed the need for a modernized and expanded Customs Union framework as a win-win for all partners.”

Dr. Markus C. Slevogt, President of the German-Turkish Chamber of Industry and Commerce said: „The customs union is an integral part of German-Turkish trade relations. It serves as a catalyst for growing prosperity and enhancing economic development in Germany and Turkey alike. Therefore, the modernization of the Customs Union is an important step in order to strengthen the already deeply rooted relationship between these two countries and to prepare it for the challenges of the upcoming decades.“

Levent Apaydın, President of the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Turkey said: “The depth and scope of the Customs Union should be addressed to meet the requirements of the global economy. Upgrading the existing Customs Union provides a potential for a better and stronger Turkey-EU partnership and of course a better and stronger Belgian/Luxembourg - Turkish partnership in every aspect as it was the case two decades ago. There is no doubt that such achievement will create a ‘win-win’ situation for both sides in economic terms and will increase Turkey’s ability to better harmonize its trade and economic policies with the EU, in a time of intensifying, global cutthroat competition, with financial volatility and turbulent waters globally.”

Georg Karabaczek, Austrian Trade Commissioner for Turkey stated: “Our survey of Austrian Companies active in Turkey shows that 76% of the CEO’s expect positive effects on their business from a modernized and deepened customs union between Turkey and the EU.”

Livio Manzini, President of Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Turkey commented: “Turkish Italian trade relations are maybe the oldest ones as well as being one of the largest and more balanced one Turkey has with any other country. Over time we have witnessed how expanding commercial ties have always gone hand in hand with closer and better bilateral relations creating a virtuous win-win cycle. To rekindle the momentum of closer integration now is the time for a bold initiative on the commercial front by modernizing and deepening the customs union agreement.”

Zeynep Necipoğlu, President of French Chamber of Commerce in Turkey said about the customs union: “Turkey is the EU's fifth largest trading partner, while the EU is Turkey's largest. French business actors see Turkey as a potential hub to develop activities in the Middle East and Central Asia. The modernization and the upgrading of Turkey-EU Customs Union, represent an opportunity for enhancing the economic integration between Turkey and EU countries. The French-Turkish business communities strongly support the encouraging actions.”

Chris Gaunt, OBE, President of British Chamber of Commerce in Turkey added: “Given that Europe and the Global economies will have to reset and adjust according to the new normal post Covid, an enhanced customs union agreement for Turkey will provide the impetus to re-engage with the EU single market and generate increased bilateral trade and economic prosperity.”

Arpat Şenocak, President of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey stated: “The Swiss-Turkish business community is a strong supporter of the modernization of the Customs Union. Based on the encouraging steps taken in the context of the renewal of the Free Trade Agreement between Turkey and the European Free Trade Association (including Switzerland), we believe that improving the framework for

trade between the EU and Turkey would certainly bring mutual success and benefit for both parties, and help building a stronger dialogue.”

Gregor Van Der Mark, President of Dutch Business Association Turkey said: “From business perspective, The EU Customs Union Agreement needs to be updated to the same level as the business is tomorrow this to ensure a better future for all.”

For the complete position paper please visit our website <https://www.dtr-ihk.de/tr/bilgi-koesesi>

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