

TURKEY - FRANCE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

**“Thinking Diplomacy:
New World New Horizons”**

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VISION DOCUMENT (DRAFT)

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(Turkey - France)

Turkey distinguishes itself with an 84-million inhabitants, growing economy and geo-strategic status in the center of Afro-Eurasia. Turkey's historical, political and cultural ties between Europe, Black Sea, Caucasus, Asia, Middle East and African countries, rising activity in the international arena, especially in the United Nations, being an important member of organizations such as NATO, OSCE and CICA and with active foreign policy, it has become an increasingly important actor on the global platform.

France is an important country at regional and global level because of its strategic position on the Atlantic and Afro-Eurasian transit routes, deep political, historical and cultural background, 67 million inhabitants, dynamic economy, \$ 2,777 trillion GDP and membership to international institutions and organizations such as, UNSC, NATO, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OECD etc.

France is the largest grain producer among EU member countries and the country with the highest outweigh of agriculture and food sector among Western European countries. Hence, it is the country that steers the EU's agricultural policies to a great extent. The automotive industry creates 10% of the national income with the added value it creates in France and provides employment to one out of every ten employees in the country. France, the world's largest exporter of electricity, is the country that attracts the most foreign investment in the world after the USA and the UK.

Turkish - French relations traces back to 1526, when Suleiman the Magnificent responded positively to the French King Francis I's request for help. During the Ottoman period, through a process of economic relations ranging from capitulations to Ottoman Public Debt Administration (Duyun-u Umumiye), relations that have witnessed alliances and mutual conflicts have been experienced. Ankara Treaty that signed on October 20, 1921, between Government of the Grand National Assembly and France, was the beginning of a new relationship between the new Turkish state and France.

The bilateral trade volume between Turkey and France stood at nearly 14 billion euros in 2019 and trade gap weigh against France was approximately 1.3 billion euros. France was the 7th among the most important trading countries of Turkey in 2019. The main products exported by Turkey to France are automobile industry products, garments, automobile sub-industry products, electrical household appliances, machinery and devices for general use, textile industry products and electrical devices. The main products exported by France to Turkey are aircraft and aerospace industry products, automobile (side) industry products, machinery and devices for general use, basic chemicals, nitrogenous, plastic and synthetic rubber products. 1,524 companies with French capital operate in Turkey.

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France to Turkey, on the basis of five hundred years of established relationships, is an important trade and economic partners. It is also an important ally, with a population of approximately 800,000 Turkish people. The Ankara Agreement, which was signed on 20 October 1921 during the War of Independence (of Turkey), forms the basis of the official relations between the two countries. In 2019, Turkey was visited by 875,957 French tourists.

Turkey and France are two countries involved in joint efforts to strive for the development of human rights, freedoms and democracy both in common geographies they are close and around the globe. Both these common goals in the international arena and the intense economic relations of the two countries constitute an important infrastructure for the positive course of political relations.

The trade volume, military cooperation opportunities, relations between Middle East countries, Turkey's EU accession process, the Turkish workers in France, cultural interaction and tourism can be counted in among the elements of Turkey's relations with France. In addition to the intensive bilateral relations and corporate plans, France is among Turkey's most important partners in the defense and political structures of Europe such as, NATO, OSCE, the Council of Europe. For example, in the Balkans and Afghanistan, Turkey and France is carrying out joint military missions. Democracy, secularism, World Trade Organization membership and developmental economies are common feature of the two countries.

However, issues continue to occur in political relationship though France has lately adopted a less stern approach in their attempts of preventing the discussion of certain subjects in the negotiation process of Turkey's acceptance into the EU as a full state member for the last years.

The fact that France defined the events that took place in Anatolia in 1915 as a "genocide" by a law adopted, it has also overshadowed the relations. The relevant law proposal was found contrary to constitution on the grounds of "violation of the freedom of expression" and subsequently canceled by the Constitutional Council on 28 February 2012. At the time when proposed law remain on the agenda, Turkey has resorted to a series of measures aimed at France.

France and Turkey's level of the relationship is far below the potential level because of historical and cyclical reasons. It is clear that the economic relations between the two countries can be carried to much better levels on a realistic and permanent basis. In this context, France can take serious steps to review stereotypes and prejudices about Turkey in the process of Turkey's EU membership. North Africa and the Middle East countries, especially in Tunisia and Egypt, Turkey and France can develop extremely appropriate policies and activities for their common interests.

Turkey's increasing activity in regional and global and regional level alongside France's leading role at the global level must be taken into account in terms of the potential of the two countries' relations. There is an increasing potential available for cooperation in the fields of energy and investment.

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The basis tendency coming with globalization and multidimensionality which gained momentum after the end of the Cold War, aims to strengthen the countries not by themselves but through certain regional cooperation and trans-regional partnerships. Countries are now moving towards an open structure based on dialogue and cooperation in economic, political and cultural terms, while those who cannot adapt are experiencing serious instability.

It is being deeply felt that there is an urgent necessity for collaborative works of the two countries so that the solutions for the regional issues can be found. Now it is required that the two countries head towards a future structure, in order to uplift the Turkey - France relations an ideal point within a world power schema which takes its form in a multi-dimensional way, by creating a mutual deepening not only in political and strategic basis but also in its each parameter. History offers both the two countries opportunities for deepening their interdependency. In this regard, the **Turkey - France Strategic Dialogue**, which will bring together the representatives of the related sectors in a comprehensive way that includes the strategic dimension of the relations, will play a significant role.

Main Theme

Thinking Diplomacy: New World New Horizons

Sub Themes

New Balances New Economy

Turkey - France Economic Relations: Opportunities and Obstacles

Energy Policies: Geopolitical and Security Cooperation

Technological Cooperation, Academic and Cultural Cooperation

Social, Economic and Political Developments

Turkey's EU Membership Process and Turkey - France Relations

Cooperation Opportunities in the Context of Middle East, Africa and Central Asian Countries

Relations with the US and New Partners: Transatlantic & Pacific Strategies

Priority Sectors

Public Diplomacy, Education and Language

Culture and Tourism

Construction, Contracting and Infrastructure

Health and Health Tourism

Energy, Petrochemicals and Investments

Logistics, Transportation and Telecommunication

Banking and Finance (Strategic Investment Fund)

Economy and Trade

Media and Communication

Science and Technology

Brand Cities and Environment

Defence and Space Industry

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STUDIES AND ACTIVITIES (DRAFT)

Method

Inductive Reasoning, Participation and Economic Deepening

Turkey - France Committee of Wise Persons Meetings Workshop

Building Capacity and Ecosystem Inventory

Preparation of Research Projects and their Reports

Development of Pro-active Policy Recommendations

Round-Table Meetings/Workshops

Multilateral Workshops/Studies

Sector Workshops/Activities

Applied Interactive Modelings

Strategic Reports

Publication of sector studies as strategic reports for decision makers, private sector, media and public opinion of the two countries. Providing literature and memory support.

Media Conferences

Other Academic Studies

Strategic Reports, Books, Articles, Thesis and so on Academic Studies