

TISK information

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Viewpoint



The Turkish Business Sector and The Syrians in Turkey

One of the most important challenges that Turkey will continue to face in the New Year is the Syrian asylum-seekers issue described as the "the biggest humanitarian emergency of our era" by the United Nations. Stemming from 4.5 years of civil war in Syria, this multi-dimensional problem has become one of the most pressing matters in Turkey today.

As of November 2015, there are 2.2 million estimated Syrians in Turkey due to the conflict in the region and the resulting migration since April 2011. Contrary to the initial expectations, the Syrian asylum-seekers are now expected to stay in Turkey much longer than originally thought. As a result of this development, serious problems in various areas including economy, labor, social and cultural integration, healthcare, education and accommodation are emerging.

In collaboration with Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO), TISK recently commissioned a research that analyzed the economic and social dimensions of this challenge and assessed the perspectives of the business sector with the aim of offering suggestions to the policy-makers.

The research was conducted in 18 economically prominent provinces of Turkey. Interviews took place with businessmen/businesswomen, Chambers of Industry and Commerce, NGO representatives as well as the Government Officials.

The research has shown that in general the Turkish business sector evaluates the Syrians' situation in Turkey with sympathy and tolerance. However, the sector strongly urges policy makers to take all necessary measures in order to facilitate Syrians' integration with the Turkish society without delay. During the interviews, the sector also emphasized the importance of dialog between the business sector and the Government before any regulatory measures were taken.

The findings of this important research were recently published in a report titled "Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey". Although the report is in Turkish currently, the English version will be available soon. Our readers can obtain free copies of either version at our www.tisk.org.tr website.

I wish all of you a happy and prosperous New Year!

President
Yağız EYÜBOĞLU

G20 and B20 Summits in Antalya



G20 Leaders' family photograph in Antalya

G20 Summit of heads of state or government was held in Antalya on 15-16 November 2015 following the B20 Summit gathering business leaders which was held on 14 November.

TISK President Yağız Eyüboğlu, Vice-President Erol Kiresepi and numerous TISK representatives attended the Summits.

At the end of the Summit, G20 Leaders adopted a comprehensive agenda focusing on:

- the decisive implementation of past commitments,
- boosting investments as a powerful driver of economic growth,
- promoting inclusiveness of the global economic growth.

In their Final Communiqué, the leaders of the G20 said they would "carefully calibrate" and "clearly communicate" policy decisions, a nod to the sensitivity of financial markets, which have seen dramatic moves this year on expectations of a U.S. Federal Reserve's rate hike. The Communiqué also emphasized previous exchange rate commitments and pledges to resist protectionism.

"We remain committed to achieving our ambition to lift collective G20 GDP by an additional 2 percent by 2018," the leaders said.

On the refugee crisis, the Final Communiqué included the following paragraph:

"The scale of ongoing refugee crisis is a global

concern with major humanitarian, political, social and economic consequences. There is a need for a coordinated and comprehensive response to tackle this crisis, as well as its long term consequences... We call upon all states to contribute to responding to this crisis, and share in the burdens associated with it, including through refugee resettlement, other forms of humanitarian admission, humanitarian aid and efforts to ensure that refugees can access services, education and livelihood opportunities."

The G20 Leaders also thanked Turkey in the Final Communiqué for its G20 Presidency and hosting a successful Antalya Summit this year.

During the Antalya Summit, G20 Leaders also condemned terrorism and put the struggle against terrorism at the top of their priorities. With a G20 Statement on the Fight Against Terrorism issued at the end of the Summit, they condemned in the strongest possible terms, the heinous terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November and in Ankara on 10 October by declaring that the fight against terrorism is a major priority for all of their countries and reiterating their resolve to work together to prevent and suppress terrorist acts through increased international solidarity and cooperation.

B20 Turkey Summit was also held in Antalya on Nov. 14-15 with the participation of more than 560 business leaders from 41 countries. During the meetings, distinguished participants from various countries discussed the need for the wide-spread ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), increase of financing of SMEs

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TISK President Eyuboglu and Vice-President Kiresepi attending the B20 Summit "Trade, Jobs and Competitiveness" Session

and diversification of opportunities for SME financing and financial regulations improvements. B20 Turkey Taskforce Chairs delivered remarks on their taskforce recommendations.

During the year 2015, B20 Employment Taskforce, which is one of the 6 sub-groups of the B20 and working with a busy agenda held meetings and conferences calls. TİSK took an active role part in the meetings and shared its views as the umbrella organization to represent Turkish Employers in Industrial Relations nationally.

Building on the work of previous B20 processes, the B20 Turkey Employment Taskforce proposed three recommendations for the G20 leaders to address current employment challenges:

1. Advance a business-friendly environment to create employment opportunities,
2. Increase youth and female labor force participation by making labor markets more dynamic and inclusive,
3. Develop and finance programs aimed at reducing skills mismatches in an era of innovation and rapid technological change.

All of these recommendations were included in the G20 Leaders' Communiqué issued after the Antalya Summit.

In addition to its efforts on developing recommendations during 2015, B20 Employment Taskforce also worked intensively with Labour 20 (L20), representing the interest of workers, in preparing the B20-L20 Joint Declaration. L20-B20 joint statement entitled "Jobs, Growth and Decent Work" was signed on 4 September 2015 in Ankara.

TİSK will be the implementing institution of two projects mentioned in the declaration; first on "work-based training" and second on "occupational safety and health".

Under Turkish presidency G20 and B20 Summits have been hailed as success. China will preside over G20 in 2016.

Election results

An early parliamentary election was held in Turkey on Sunday, November 1st, following the inconclusive outcome of the June 7, 2015 legislative election.

The election results indicated that the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has regained the majority by winning 49.5 percent of the votes.

The 26th legislative term of Turkey's parliament opened on Nov. 17 with newly elected members taking their oaths and with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in attendance. Erdoğan gave Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu the mandate to form a new government.

Davutoğlu formed the 62nd government upon the approval of the new cabinet list on Nov. 24.

New government's program was announced on Nov. 25. Addressing the Grand National Assembly, Davutoğlu said the government would focus on reforms in six key areas - democratization and justice; education; public administration; public finance; changes in the "real economy"; and priority transformation programs.

A new report on Syrians seeking asylum in Turkey



(from left to right) TİSK Board Member S.Abeş, HUGO Director Assoc. Prof.Dr.M.Erdoğan, TİSK President Y. Eyüboğlu, UN Committee on Migrant Workers Member Dr. C.Ünver and TİSK Board Member N.Buzbaş at the launching of the report

The situation of Syrians in Turkey and perspectives of the business sector was studied for the first time by TİSK, in collaboration with Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Centre (HUGO).

The report entitled "**Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey**" underlines the urgent need for comprehensive integration policy regarding the employment of Syrians. The Report reveals that around 400,000 out of the total 2.2 million Syrians currently living in Turkey are unregistered workers, many of whom are children working in unhealthy conditions with low wages; unregistered Syrian workers accept jobs at wages one-third of those received by Turkish workers on average; almost all businesses established by Syrians in

Turkey are unregistered; 1.2 million of the Syrians currently in Turkey are under the age of 18, while 150,000 children have been born of Syrian parents in Turkey since 2011.

As part of research for the report, 134 people were interviewed over five months, in economically developed 18 provinces identified as being affected the most by Syrians.

The Report was launched on 7 December 2015 in İstanbul. TİSK President Yağız Eyüboğlu's opening speech was followed by the HUGO Director Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murat Erdoğan and UN Committee on Migrant Workers member Dr. Can Ünver's presentation of the Report. During the meeting, HUGO Research Assistants also shared their experiences from the field.

President Eyüboğlu stated that Syrians have an important impact on labour market and there is a need to take precautions to prevent the rise of unregistered employment. The lack of concrete and reliable data about the Syrian workforce in Turkey has prevented the implementation of the correct labour market policies, he also said, urging the government to coordinate this work.

Eyüboğlu also stressed that public institutions and NGOs should establish a common platform and start working together.

"ILO's Response to Syrian Influx in Turkey" Project Meeting

"ILO's Response to Syrian Influx in Turkey" project stakeholder meeting, held on 16 November 2015, gathered representatives from public sector, civil society and business associations in order to share information about the project, foster information sharing and discuss the labour market dimension of the crisis.

The project aims to identify employment and training opportunities, and the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work – for both refugees and host communities affected by the crisis and implement capacity building programmes in related ministries, municipalities, civil society organizations.

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Head Office : Hoşdere Cad. Reşat Nuri Sok.
No: 108 06540 Çankaya / Ankara - TURKEY
Tel : (+90.312) 439 77 17 (pbx)
Fax : (+90.312) 439 75 92-94
URL : http://www.tisk.org.tr
E-Mail : tisk@tisk.org.tr
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Licensed owner on behalf of
the Turkish Confederation of
Employer Associations **Yağız EYÜBOĞLU**

Secretary-General of TİSK **Bülent PİRLER**

Editor-in Chief of the Periodical
"İŞVEREN" **Bülent PİRLER**

Editor-in Chief of "TİSK
INFORMATION" **A. Ferhat İLTER**

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Head Office : Çetin Emec Bulvarı 1322 Cadde
64/6 A.Öveçler / ANKARA
Tel : (+90.312) 472 86 12 - 23
Fax : (+90.312) 472 86 23

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TISK Vice-President Erol Kiresepi as Representative of Turkish and International Employers at Global Forums

The 4th Annual United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights took place between 16-18 November 2015 in Geneva bringing together high level representatives from all around the world working on the “Business and Human Rights” agenda. TISK Vice President Erol Kiresepi represented the Turkish and international employers at the Forum. Kiresepi participated in numerous meetings as a speaker at the Forum where the contribution of business to the improvement of human rights all over the world was evaluated.

During the “Business Pre-meeting” meeting held at the Canadian Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Kiresepi came together with global business representatives and delivered a speech on United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the actions taken by the Turkish companies regarding the Principles.

Touching upon the developments in Turkey regarding the Syrian immigrants, Kiresepi underlined that all countries need to take action as it is the largest migration flow since the Second World War period.

Delivering a speech during the high-level panel on



TISK Vice-President E. Kiresepi speaking at the UN Forum (rightmost)

“Informality, SMEs and human rights: Challenges and Solutions”, Kiresepi stated that for SMEs to contribute to the improvement of human rights issues, they need to be supported by the governments. Kiresepi also called upon national and international employers’ organizations to lead the way forward.

During the panel discussion on “Respecting Children’s Rights in Law and Practice”, speaking as the ILO Child Labour Platform co-chair, Kiresepi praised the Platform as a highly useful instrument for businesses to combat child labor and protection of the rights of children. He emphasized that the

Platform served as a medium for business to share best practices and helped them to focus on fundamental problems and possible solutions they can introduce to these problems through their operations.

Kiresepi said “Our Confederation will continue representing the Turkish employers at all levels and closely following the developments in the industrial relations.”

On the other hand, Kiresepi attended the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held on 14-16 October 2015 where the migration problem was addressed by the multinational employers.

Kiresepi chaired the panel “Partnerships and Actions for Recruitment and Employment of Migrant Workers” in which Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu delivered a speech.

During the Civil Society Days held on the first two days of the summit more than 300 global civil society leaders identified the recommendations on migration and development to be presented to the governments.

1st Global Employers Summit



TISK Secretary-General Bülent Pirlir addressing the Summit

The first annual Global Employers’ Summit of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), took place on 6 – 7 October in Bahrain.

Jointly organised by the IOE and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), the Summit was held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Summit brought together high-level figures from global companies, international organisations, Employers’ Organisations and institutions, to explore key areas of interest for business including labour mobility across borders, business and human rights, promoting inclusion

and diversity, the role of the financial sector, and more. International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director-General Guy Ryder, OECD Deputy Secretary-General Stefan Kapferer and WTO Deputy Director-General Yonov Frederick Agah were some of the many high-level speakers to join the summit.

TISK Secretary General Bülent Pirlir delivered a speech in Social Inclusion Session of the Summit and TISK Representative Koray Balkaya delivered a presentation on GAN TURKEY’s activities and future steps in Global Apprenticeships Network side event.

The event concluded with the Signature Ceremony of the Bahrain Declaration.

ETF Donor Co-Operation in VET Annual Knowledge Sharing Meeting on Work Based Learning

European Training Foundation’s 5th Donor Co-Operation in VET Annual Knowledge Sharing Meeting On Work Based Learning was held on 26-27 October 2015 in Turin.

The institutions and donors active in the Western Balkans and Turkey, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern Europe in the area of human capital development and which have an interest in work-based learning came together in order to discuss the recent developments on work-based learning.

TISK Representative Koray Balkaya delivered a presentation on TISK’s activities on work based learning focusing on GAN TURKEY.

The winners of TISK 2015 CSR awards

TISK announced the annual TISK 2015 CSR Awards winners on 30 November 2015, 49 enterprises, consisting of 52 large-scale and 6 SMEs, had sent their application forms to TISK. These 68 projects were first evaluated by the Nomination Committee on 22 October 2015 at TISK's Headquarters. Based on the preliminary screening, 23 projects passed to the finale. The finalist projects were afterwards evaluated on 25 November 2015, by the Selection Committee which was composed of respected names from workers & employers' associations, government, media, universities and NGO sectors.

The Selection Committee selected 9 enterprises' projects for sustainability, effectiveness, inclusion, innovation, best practice, grand, Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN) Turkey and honorable mention award categories.

The grand award was granted to Ford Otosan's "Disabled Friendly Plant" project.



TISK 2015 CSR Awards Nomination Committee

"Contribution to Social Responsibility" award to CSR for ALL Project

Enterprise 2023 Summit organized by Corporate Social Responsibility Association of Turkey was held on 8 December 2015. The Summit featured an Awards Ceremony in which selected companies and NGOs received awards for their best practices and successful performances.

During the Summit, CSR for ALL Project led by TISK received the "Contribution to Social Responsibility" award.

UNDP Resilience Forum

Hosted by the United Nations Development Program and government of Jordan, under the theme "Integrating Responses, Expanding Partnerships," the Resilience Development Forum was held on 8-9 November 2015 in Amman.

The Forum brought together key humanitarian and development stakeholders, including UN agencies, international financial institutions, donors, international and national non-governmental organizations, and the private sector alongside senior government representatives from countries affected by the Syria crisis. Participants collectively considered a new vision of the response to the crisis, now well into its fifth year.



Enterprises Awarded:

	Enterprise Name	Project Name
Large Scale Company		
Grand Award	FORD Otosan	Disabled Friendly Plant
Inclusion Award	Allianz Turkey	Allianz in Soma
Effectiveness Award	Boyner Büyük Mağazacılık	Cycle into favor
Best Practice Award	Opet	Traffic Detectives
Sustainability Award	Visa Europe	I Can Manage My Money
Innovation Award	STFA Group	TEVİTÖL Future Camp / Let your our future be same color as you
GAN TURKEY Special Award	Mercedes-Benz Turkey	"On the job training @MBT"
SME		
Honorable Mention Award	KOPPERT	Promotion of natural agricultural techniques among producers and consumers
Honorable Mention Award	Polat Organic Fertilizer	Fertilizer production from agricultural waste

GAN Impact Day

Global Apprenticeships Network (GAN) Impact Day was held on 3-4 December 2015 in Madrid.

Representatives from GAN national networks, private sector, academics and NGO's held discussions on future jobs and future skills, e-learning tools and platforms, gender mainstreaming, reaching out to SMEs in the supply chain and GAN National Networks.

TISK representative Koray Balkaya also delivered a speech on activities and future steps of GAN TURKEY.

Turkish people display flexibility and adaptability in the face of new challenges

Flexibility and Adaptability



Source: IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2015

According to the Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Yearbook 2015, flexibility and adaptability of Turkish people are high when faced with new challenges.

Turkey ranks 11th among 61 countries with 7.28 points. The index shows that people from Ireland, Hong Kong and Israel have high adaptability and flexibility when faced with new challenges.

This benchmark shows to which degree senior business leaders in the country assess that the local population displays flexibility and adaptability in the face of challenge.

The data is conducted by IMD from the Executive

Opinion Survey.

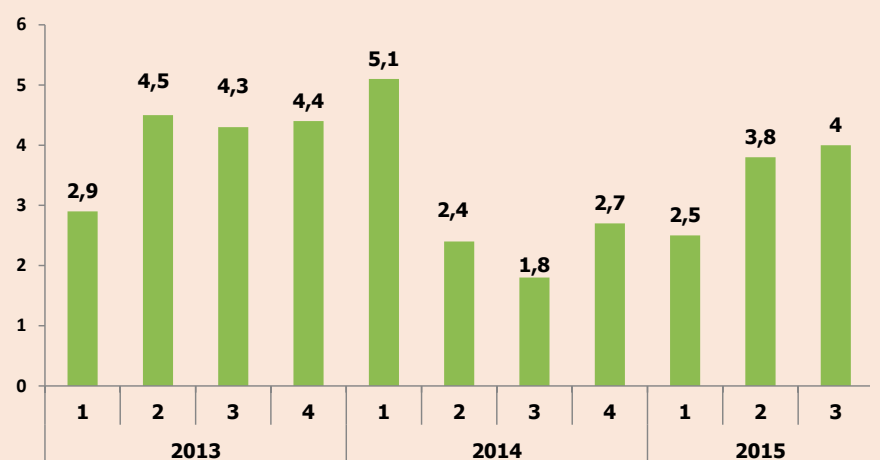
Turkey's economy grows 4 percent in the third quarter

Turkey's economy grew at a surprising 4 percent in the third quarter from the same period in the previous year, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) revealed on December 11th, beating expectations and showing that the economy is in better shape than many analysts forecasted.

The figure exceeded analyst consensus estimates at 2.7 percent. Growth was up from 3.8 percent in the second quarter. The nine-month GDP growth rate was 3.4 percent in the third quarter of 2015.

Growth rate in agriculture over to the same quarter of 2014 was higher than the growth rate in industry and services. Value added of agriculture increased by 11.1 percent in the third quarter of 2015 whereas value added of industry increased by 7.5 percent and value added of services increased by 5 percent at constant prices in the third quarter of 2015.

Growth rate at constant prices, %



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK)

Nobel Prize for Aziz Sancar

A Turkish-American DNA scientist was among the three names to win this year's Nobel Prize in chemistry, the award-giving body announced on Oct. 7.

Aziz Sancar, Sweden's Tomas Lindahl, and the U.S.-based Paul Modrich won the prize for work on mapping how cells repair damaged DNA.

Their work has provided fundamental knowledge of how a living cell functions and is, for instance, used for the development of new cancer treatments," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said in a statement awarding the 8 million Swedish crowns (\$969,000).

"I am glad to be known for the work that I've done for years. Furthermore, I am also happy for my family, my homeland and my new homeland that I have come to. This is particularly important for Turkey" Sancar said.

Sancar emphasized the necessity of science education at early ages, specifically asking peoples living in the country's east and southeast to send their young girls to school. He added that the medicine education he received from Istanbul University Medical School had contributed much to his academic efforts that won him the Nobel Prize.

Sancar was born in Savur district of the southeaster province of Mardin in 1946. The child of "parents who were illiterate but who valued education," Sancar studied medicine at Istanbul University



in 1963 and moved to the United States after graduation, completing his Ph.D. on the photo reactivating enzyme of E. coli in 1977 in the laboratory of Dr. C. Stan Rupert.

The author of around 300 scientific papers, Sancar has been working at North Carolina University since 1997. Sancar, who was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 2005 and the Turkish Academy of Sciences the following year, also the received Vehbi Koç Award in 2007.

Aziz Sancar visited Turkey and met with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar in Ankara on Dec. 15.

After the visits, he said that he had entrusted his Nobel medal and certificate to Gen. Akar in order for it to be placed at Atatürk's mausoleum, Anıtkabir, on May 19, the Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day. May 19 is considered to mark the beginning of the Turkish War of Independence and is a national holiday in Turkey.

EU – Turkey Summit Meeting

On 29 November 2015, EU heads of state or government held a meeting with Turkey in Brussels. The meeting marked an important step in developing EU – Turkey relations and contributing to managing the migration crisis. European Council President Donald Tusk chaired the meeting, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu represented Turkey.

According to the Joint Statement issued after the meeting:

- The EU and Turkey agreed to re-energise Turkey's accession process to the European Union. High-level dialogue between both parties will be reinforced through more frequent and structured meetings including the organisation of summits twice a year. Regular summits will provide a platform to assess the development of Turkey-EU relations and discuss international issues.
- A Joint Action Plan has been adopted at the meeting to deal with the refugee crisis created by the situation in Syria. The EU and its member states will increase their cooperation with Turkey and step up their political and financial engagement substantially. The EU is committed to provide an initial €3 billion euro of additional resources to Turkey to help it cope with the

high numbers of Syrian refugees currently in the country. With the implementation of the action plan, both sides will step up their active cooperation on migrants who are not in need of international protection, by:

- preventing travel to Turkey and the EU,
- ensuring the application of the established bilateral readmission provisions,
- swiftly returning them to their countries of origin.
- Leaders welcomed the intention of Turkey to further improve the situation of the Syrians under temporary protection and remain committed to fight against criminal smuggling networks.
- The EU and Turkey agreed to apply from June 2016 the readmission agreement. They are aiming to complete the visa liberalization process, and the lifting of visa requirements for Turkish citizens in the Schengen zone, by October 2016.
- The leaders announced an Intergovernmental Conference on 14 December 2015 to open chapter 17 of the accession process, on further economic integration with Turkey.

The European Commission will start the preparation work on further chapters without prejudice to the position of member states.

Following the Summit Meeting, EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker sent a statement to Davutoğlu in the form of an appendix to the Joint Statement issued on Nov. 29 which promises action on the opening of five new chapters: Chapter 15: Energy; Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights; Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security; Chapter 26: Education and culture; and Chapter 31: Foreign security and defense policy.

As a follow-up to the EU-Turkey Summit Meeting, the 11th meeting of the Accession Conference with Turkey at Ministerial level was held on 14 December 2015 in Brussels. The Conference opened negotiations with Turkey on Chapter 17: Economic and monetary policy. This chapter covers specific rules requiring the independence of central banks in Member States, prohibiting direct financing of the public sector by the central banks and prohibiting privileged access of the public sector to financial institutions. Member States are expected to co-ordinate their economic policies and are subject to the Stability and Growth Pack on fiscal surveillance.

Concerts & Exhibitions

Chris Botti, Zorlu Performing Arts Center

January 16, 2016



Christopher Stephen "Chris" Botti, an American trumpeter and composer will perform on January 16th at Zorlu Performans Sanatları Merkezi.

Botti picked up a trumpet when he was nine years old and the rest is a prominent musical history...

His affection for jazz and craftsmanship took him to such level that secured him the well-deserved international recognition to do top-notch projects with first-rate musicians such as Buddy Rich, Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell, Frank Sinatra, Aretha Franklin and many more!

Trumpeter's final album Impressions is the last installation of his brilliance. 2004's When I Fall In Love and the follow up To Love Again, Italia and the live feature Chris Botti In Boston have catapulted him to a point also known as the world's largest selling jazz instrumentalist. Top these amazing albums with a Grammy for "Best Pop Instrumental Album" and four number one albums on Billboard's Jazz Albums charts.

9th International Ankara Flamenco Festival

October 30, 2015 – January 23, 2016



The 9th Ankara Flamenco Festival will be organized from Oct. 30, 2015 to Jan. 23, 2016 in Turkey's capital, Ankara. Organized by the Ankara Flamenco Association in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy Cultural Attaché, the festival will host world leading flamenco guitar virtuosos and dancers.

A Spanish guest of the festival, Oscar Guzman Ensemble, will take the stage on the closing day of the festival on January 23, 2016 at the National Education Ministry Şura Hall. The group will perform their album "Calle de las Memorias." Lola Jaramillo and Jesús Herrera will accompany the group.

Andre Rieu, Istanbul and Ankara

March 10-12, 2016



Recognized as one of the most important musicians of this century by world's music authorities, André Rieu is coming to Turkey again with his brand new act and incredible show within the scope of his 2015 World Tour. "The King of Waltz" will play in Ankara for the first time on March 10, 2016.

World renowned artist André Rieu who carried classical music to Olympic stadiums and enabled it to reach wider masses will once again meet his fans in Turkey in March. Making it snow and rain colorful balloons on stage at his concert in last November, as well as winning hearts with Turkish song surprises, Rieu will once again put on a show that will be never-forgotten.

Rieu has been number one on world music charts 30 times, has 355 Platinum Album Awards, sold 35 million DVDs, become the best-seller male artist in 2012, and Year's Tour Artist Top 10 in 2009-2011.

Chris de Burgh, Ülker Sports Arena

February 28, 2016



Christopher John Davison, a British-Irish singer-songwriter and instrumentalist will perform in Istanbul on February 28, 2016. He is most famous for his 1986 love song "The Lady in Red", which reached number one in several countries. De Burgh has sold over 45 million albums worldwide.

It was "Into the Light", Chris de Burgh's eighth studio album, released on 1986, that became a number one record. It features the single "The Lady in Red", released officially as a single in its own right on 1986, making it to the top 10 of 23 different charts. His following album "Flying Colors" had similar success, making it to number 1 in three different countries, whilst "Power of Ten" made it to number 1 in just Germany. Between "This Way Up" released on 1994, and the album "Home", released on 2012, Chris de Burgh's albums would at least make it into the charts of four different countries. He released his latest album "The Hands of Man" on September 26th 2014.

Bilkent Symphony Orchestra "A New Year, New Expectations" Concert

January 16, 2016



Bilkent Symphony Orchestra's New Year Concert will be held on January 16, 2016 in Ankara. The Concert will feature classical Czech guitarist Pavel Steidl and Turkish conductor and violinist Önder Baloğlu.

Concert program includes G. Puccini's Crisantemi, M. Giuliani's Guitar Concerto, and P.I. Tchaikovsky's Souvenir de Florence.

Cappadocia continues to attract tourists with newly discovered underground city

Cappadocia is a historical region in Central Anatolia, largely in the Nevşehir, Kayseri, Aksaray, and Niğde Provinces in Turkey.

The name, traditionally used in Christian sources throughout history, continues in use as an international tourism concept to define a region of exceptional natural wonders, in particular characterized by “fairy chimney” rock formations and a unique historical and cultural heritage which are already on the UNESCO world heritage list.

As if plucked from a whimsical fairytale and set down upon the stark Anatolian plains, Cappadocia is a geological oddity of honeycombed hills and towering boulders of otherworldly beauty. The fantastical topography is matched by the human history here. People have long utilised the region’s soft stone, seeking shelter underground and leaving the countryside scattered with fascinating troglodyte-style architecture and outstanding examples of Byzantine art. The fresco-adorned rock-cut churches of Göreme Open-Air Museum (a World Heritage site) and the underground cities Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı are the most famous sights, while simply bedding down in one of Cappadocia’s cave hotels is an experience in 21st-century cavern dwelling. The best historic mansions and cave houses for tourist stays are in Urgup, Goreme, Guzelyurt and Uchisar.

Hot-air ballooning is very popular in Cappadocia and is available in Goreme. Trekking is enjoyed in Ihlara Valley (about an hour west of the core of Cappadocia), Monastery Valley (Guzelyurt), Urgup and Goreme.

Whether you’re wooed here by the hiking potential, the history or the bragging rights of unique accommodation, it’s the lunarscape panoramas that you’ll remember. This region’s accordion-ridged valleys, shaded in a palette of dusky orange and cream, are an epiphany of a landscape – the stuff of psychedelic daydreams.



How to go to Cappadocia?

Turkish Airlines flies from Istanbul to Nevşehir, Cappadocia. It also flies to nearby Kayseri from Istanbul, as does Anadolu Jet, while Pegasus Airlines flies from both Istanbul and Izmir and Sun Express flies from Germany. Daily buses from Istanbul take about 11 hours (normally overnight).

When to Visit

Cappadocia is settled on a high, dry plateau in the middle of Turkey. The region is one of hot, dry summers and cold, sometimes snowy, winters.

Ancient underground city in Cappadocia will ‘rewrite history’

An underground city found in Turkey’s touristic Cappadocia will “rewrite the history of the city,” according to the mayor in the Central Anatolian Nevşehir province, who added that they had discovered people had permanently lived in the underground city, unlike other cities which were mostly carved into rocks for temporary protection.

Hasan Ünver, said the new findings at the ancient underground city in the province would rewrite history. “When the works are finalized the history of Cappadocia will be rewritten,” said Ünver, adding the findings found during the excavations dated back as the Hittite era. “We have reached significant discoveries; new long tunnels and

spaces where people lived all together. Places where linseed oil was produced, chapels and tunnels combining various living spaces in the underground city were found,” he said. Stating that the unearthed tunnels and spaces were different from other underground cities across the world, Ünver said. “This is a real underground city where they resided permanently and not like other underground cities where they had lived temporarily,” said Ünver.

The mayor said they planned for the opening of the first part of the underground city excavations in 2017, adding the digging was conducted under the guidance of archaeologist Semih İstanbulluoğlu

and the control of the Culture and Tourism Ministry.

Archaeologist Semih İstanbulluoğlu who guided the digging, said they predicted the history of the underground city to date back to even before the Hittites, adding this information would be confirmed after the finalization of the excavation’s laboratory work. He added they had found tobacco pipe-like objects made from meerschaum, adding they could not yet date them with certainty. “These can give clear information about the history of mankind,” İstanbulluoğlu said.