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Turkey News Update

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I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Republic of Turkey.

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Turkey is The World's Most Humanitarian Country

- Turkey has provided \$30 billion in services to its 3.5 million Syrian refugees, and has granted citizenship to about 60,000 Syrians. Turkey has a dual policy where they are providing services to the refugees seeking shelter within its borders, as well as working to rebuild the infrastructure of Syria so that these refugees can eventually return home.
- The Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) and the UN sent 26 humanitarian aid trucks carrying beds, tents, and containers to Idlib, Syrian.
- Turkish humanitarian agencies have provided bottled water, hot meals, food packages, core relief packages, bread, vegetables and other items to over 300,000 affected refugees in Syria.
- Following the liberation in Afrin, Turkish agencies repaired the water system that was damaged by terrorists, and have restored running water to residents. An Afrin local stated "God bless Turkey. They brought us bread and water. As long as we have bread and water, we need nothing else."
- Turkey has set up an emergency hospital in Afrin that can treat up to 400 patients daily, providing emergency medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, physical therapy, ear nose and throat, radiology, anesthesiology, eye and general surgery with plans to expand to include dentistry and gynecology.

seeds and saplings, beehives, chickens and chicken feed, and agricultural tools to these communities. It has also purchased \$1.5 million in agricultural commodities from the region to help boost the agricultural sector.

- Turkey has awarded 20,000 Syrian students with scholarships to study in Turkish universities, which will allow them to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria when they return to their country.
- Turkey and the IDB are teaming up to provide eye care needs to 12 African countries. They will provide eye examinations, eye care training for healthcare professionals, 1 million cataract surgeries, build and revise operating rooms, educate ophthalmologists, and provide 10 million children with eye glasses.
- Turkey is in talks with Japan to establish a joint disaster management plan, aimed at earthquake-resistant construction, elder services and humanitarian efforts.
- The UN Director of Emergency & Rehabilitation Division Burgeon, stated, "I congratulate the Turkish government and the Turkish people on the generous way they've embraced Syrian refugees, and I congratulate them on the support that has been provided."
- Turkey and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization are continuing efforts to help the 3.5 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey, by providing vocational programs to train refugees to grow their own food and teach them skills to work in the agricultural sector, so that they have food security and a livelihood.
- A team of 67 volunteer physicians and healthcare providers in Turkey treated 7,000 Syrian refugees, providing primary and secondary medical care, 173 dental treatments, and distributing 6,000 batches of medicine. The refugee camps also provided clothes, shoes, coloring books, balloons, and food.
- The EU and UN have praised Turkey for its contribution to the refugee crisis, stating, "Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government and people of Turkey have demonstrated unparalleled generosity in supporting refugees and integrating them into national services, including health, education, employment and other municipal and social services."

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Turkey's Economy is on the Rise

- Turkey's economy increased 7.4% in 2017, which is the largest growth of G20 countries and the second largest growth of OECD countries. Its largest growth was in the industrial, services and construction industries.

- In March there was an 11.5% year-on-year increase in goods and services from March 2017, reaching \$15.1 billion, and increasing the total exports for the first quarter to \$40.7 billion. The largest volume of exports was in the automotive industry (\$3.1 billion), the clothing sector (1.7 billion), and the chemical products sector (\$1.6 billion), with 17.7% in exports to the EU.
- Turkey has exported \$160 billion in the last 12 months, which is a 10.5% year-on-year increase.
- The 2016 breather loan for SMEs has been raised to \$1.9 billion due to its considerable success in 2017, helping contribute to the 7.4% growth in the economy and creating 1.6 million jobs.
- The Turkish government is creating \$34 billion in incentives for corporate projects, which will create 35,000 jobs directly and 134,000 jobs indirectly in the areas of health, defense, automotive, and mining and metal. The incentives will include corporate tax discounts, VAT exemption, VAT refunds for building construction expenditures, a customs tax exemption, an insurance premium, and support to employ qualified personnel.
- The \$34 billion incentive package is expected to increase exports by \$6.3 billion, and decrease imports by \$12.3 billion, cutting the account deficit by \$19 billion.
- FDI in Turkey has exceeded \$180 billion in the last 16 years.
- The World Bank approved a \$91.54 million loan for the Sustainable Cities II Project in Turkey, which aims to improve financial, economic, environmental, and social sustainability.
- Turkey's industrial production rose 9.9% in February, compared to the same month last year.
- Turkey's unemployment rate fell to 10.8% in January, down 2.2% year-on year from January 2016, with a 4.3% decrease in youth unemployment, 2.3% decrease in male unemployment, and a 2% decrease in female unemployment during the same period.
- Turkey is aiming to increase its foreign trade volume to \$1 trillion, and increase gross domestic product to \$2 trillion by 2023, by increasing investments in technology and decreasing the import of high-tech products. To achieve its goal, the country will focus on projects like the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), renewable energy investments, the domestic car project, and investment in the defense industry.
- Turkish Parliament has passed numerous reforms that aim to simplify the process of setting up companies, getting construction permits, foreign trade, conducting research, and bringing in investments.
- Turkey is providing incentives to increase indigenous defense programs, including generous tax breaks, tax reductions, exemptions from import duties, additional levies, and soft loans.
- In January and February 2018, the government incorporated 13 defense investment projects, worth \$350 million, into its incentives program.

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Tourists Flock to Turkey

- Turkey expects to host 40 million tourists, and earn \$30 billion in tourism revenue by the end of this year.
- Turkey's tourism income increased by 31.3% in the first quarter of 2018 compared to the same quarter in 2017, reaching \$4.25 billion, welcoming more than 6.1 million tourists, which is an increase of 26.4% from the same quarter in 2017.
- Last year Turkey hosted over 32 million tourists, earning \$26.5 billion in revenue.
- Turkish airports hosted 43 million travelers in the first quarter of 2018, a 21.5% year-on-year increase.
- Turkey saw a 166% increase in shopping by Chinese tourists in the first quarter of 2018, followed by U.K. tourists with an increase of 83% in spending.
- Due to a VAT refund program, shopping by all foreign visitors has increased by some 33% in the first quarter of 2018, compared to the first quarter of 2017.
- In the annual Thomas Cook Holiday Report 2018, Turkey is named the "standout destination for summer 2018" and has landed in the top 5 most popular vacation destinations.
- Package holidays to Turkey are up 84% year-on-year, with the growth being attributed to families who account for 61% of those bookings.
- Turkey's VAT exemption is also making it an attractive location for health care tourists, with special interest in hair transplants, plastic surgery, and heart surgery.

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Turkey Works to Better Ties with European Neighbors, NATO & The UN

- The European Commission is taking joint action with Turkey to increase security for refugees, and to establish two new hospitals in Syrian refugee areas in southern Turkey.
- The European Commission spent \$991 million on the education of Syrians in Turkey in 2017, and will continue backing Turkey in their efforts to help Syrian refugees.
- Turkish President Erdogan met with top EU officials at a summit in Varna, Bulgaria, where the European Commission President Juncker promised, "I, myself, guarantee that Turkey's EU accession talks will continue".
- Hungarian Ambassador to Turkey Kiss, stated, "We appreciate Turkey for hosting nearly 3.5 million Syrian refugees. We support Turkey's EU accession process and we also praise Turkey's efforts for European Union's security".
- Turkey and France have agreed to a bilateral trade target of \$24.7 billion dollars by the end of 2019.
- NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg went to Turkey in mid-April to meet with Turkish leaders in preparation for the NATO summit in Brussels.
- NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, stated, "Turkey is a highly valued and key ally", and urged all NATO allies to support Turkey. He reiterated NATO's commitment to Turkey's security efforts and its fight against

- NATO and Turkey are working on an initiative to train Iraqi soldiers, and build military academies and schools in an effort to help Iraqis stabilize their country and fight against terrorism.
- Secretary General Stoltenberg stated that Turkey has played a significant role in NATO efforts against Daesh by providing infrastructure, and air bases close to the border with Iraq and Syria which are key in the fight against the Daesh.
- Secretary General Stoltenberg said that Turkey has continued to brief NATO on military operations and humanitarian assistance in Syria.
- NATO recognizes Turkey's legitimate security concerns in Syria and understands its addressing these threats in a proportionate and measured way.
- In a few years, Turkey will be responsible for NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), which was created as a rapid response team to move against potential risks and threats, supported by air, maritime and special forces.
- Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu attended the UN meeting on peace, where he addressed Turkey's contributions and approach to UN efforts to build and sustain peace.
- European Chambers of Commerce and Industry Chairman Leidl, praised Turkey's growth performance and said that it has serious potential in terms of trade and investment, stating, "it is also of great importance for Europe. We appreciate it and we will do our best to strengthen it."

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Turkey Enhances Bi-Lateral Relations with Balkans Neighbors

- Turkish PM Yildirim, stated, "Stability and confidence in the Balkans, in fact, means security in Europe, security in the Middle East. From that point of view, we know that there's a great responsibility for peace in all the countries of the region to preserve stability. In this context, we're striving to develop friendly relations with all other countries, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina".
- The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Chairman Zvizdić, stated, "Turkey has always been among Bosnia and Herzegovina's top 10 trade partners and among its 10 biggest investors". With a current trade volume of \$737 million, the two countries are looking to increase trade to \$1.23 billion by the end of 2019, with a special focus in agricultural products.
- Ukrainian FM Klimkin said that without Turkey and the Ukraine's cooperation, security in the Middle East and Europe could not be assured. He also acknowledged Turkey's backing of the Ukraine in Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.
- Ukrainian PM Groysman, stated, "Turkey is our strategic partner. And strengthening cooperation in the trade and economic sphere is one of the key prerequisites for the successful development of a strategic partnership".
- Turkey is looking to strengthen ties with Belarus, and the two are hoping to increase their trade volume to \$1 billion from \$605 million.
- Belarusian Politician Voronetsky, stated, "Our country considers Turkey as a reliable friend, and a partner that has a promising future in the international area".
- A delegation of parliamentarians from several Balkans states (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Croatia and Kosovo) visited Turkey to extend their support to Operation Olive Branch and Turkish soldiers.

- A Bosnian representative in Croatian Parliament Kardic, said, "We stand with Turkish soldiers. We expect that the Turkish people and Turkish government support Balkans states."
- Kazakhstan FM Abdrakhmanov paid an official visit to Turkey to discuss all aspects of Turkey-Kazakhstan bilateral relations and regional issues.
- Azerbaijan's President Aliyev paid an official visit to Turkey where they discussed strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, as well as regional and international developments.
- Turkish President Erdoğan said Azerbaijan is set to become the leading foreign investor in Turkey, investing around \$14 billion, while Turkey has invested some \$12 billion into Azerbaijan.
- At the ninth Sarajevo Business Forum (SBF), Turkey called on its entrepreneurs to invest in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other Balkans nations.
- Uzbekistan President Mirziyoyev and Turkish President Erdoğan met to enhance bilateral ties in politics, military operations, the economy, trade, culture, education, environment, energy, agriculture, tourism, and the defense industry.

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US-Turkey Relations Improve

- US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Kaidanow met with representatives from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense, and the Under Secretariat for Defense Industries to share the US perspective on bilateral defense trade and regional security issues, as part of the US-Turkey Defense Trade dialogue.
- The US and Turkey show signs of improved relations, as the two have started setting common security goals, are cooperating in military operations, and are working together on a plan for Syria's recovery.
- The Turkish Foreign Ministry said that the US' strike targeting Syrian President al-Assad, was an "appropriate response" to the chemical attack that killed dozens, saying, "We welcome this operation which has eased humanity's conscience in the face of the attack in Douma, largely suspected to have been carried out by the regime".
- Turkish President Erdogan, welcomed the strikes, stating, "With the joint operation by US, UK, and France on Saturday, the Syrian regime received the message that its massacres wouldn't be left unanswered".
- US President Trump and Turkish President Erdogan spoke about the chemical weapons attack in Syria, and the pending joint airstrike retaliation ahead of the operation.
- Turkish politician Ünal said there was a sharing of information between Turkey, the US, the UK, and France before the operation, and that Turkey was expecting the reaction from its allies.
- Turkish President Erdogan addressed his concerns over weapons of mass destruction, like the chemical weapons used in Syria, exclaiming, "Let's use all resources for the sake of humanity instead of using them for nuclear and conventional armament projects."
- Acting U.S. Secretary of State Sullivan briefed Turkey's Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Yalçın over the phone, on April 14 on the latest developments in Syria after the airstrike operation.
- The Permanent US Representative at NATO Hutchison, stated, "We have many talks with Turkey on this subject. I believe that there is now a mutual understanding of our positions. I think that the situation is going to be clear on both sides on what our mission is and what their mission is. I think there will be no conflict.", she continued, "We are working with Turkey to try—first of all—to assure Turkey that we are doing nothing that

- Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu met with US Secretary of State Pompeo at the NATO Summit where they agreed to approve a road map for their continued cooperation in Syria.
- U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo issued an invitation for the Turkish FM to visit Washington to continue discussions on the Syrian roadmap.

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Turkey Seeks Innovation in Technology & Energy

- Turkey has a “recycle street”, which is completely sourced by waste products, including the lighting, décor, and furnishings. This vibrant street promotes recycling, educates the community, and supports small local businesses.
- Alibaba Cloud is working on services in Turkey that will expand its suite of cloud services to include exporters, small and medium-sized businesses and other local companies in their efforts to expand their geographic reach and better compete in global trade. The extended suite of services and products will include elastic computing, database services, networking, security and middleware to analytics and big data.
- Turkey is launching its first scientific base in Antarctica next year to conduct research and raise its profile in the international scientific community.
- Turkey placed 4th in the global geothermal energy league in 2017, and has already reached its goal to achieve 1,000 MW of installed capacity by 2023, leading to its revised goal of 4,000 MW of installed capacity by 2030. It is one of the four countries that has more than 1 GW installed.
- Turkey is set to obtain 10 new high-speed trains, which will increase capacity and comfort.
- The Turkish government has invested \$4.5 billion in the aviation sector in the last 15 years, while another \$13.5 billion worth of investments are currently being processed.
- Turkey’s first aeronautical expo was held at Antalya International Airport, where \$12 billion in trade agreements were signed. In the last 15 years, Turkey has doubled its number of airports to 55, and air passengers have increased to over 200 million a year.
- Turkey is working to promote its aerospace sector and has taken significant strides toward gaining FDI in the sector. This expo formed bridges between international aviation giants, regional players, and Turkey’s fast-growing airliners, manufacturers, defense contractors and government agencies.

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Easter Celebrated in Turkey

- Christian churches in Turkey celebrated Easter, holding services and Easter related festivities.
- A Priest of a Turkish Protestant church said that his town of Mardin is where people from various ethnic backgrounds and religions live together, and it should be a role model for the world.
- Mardin Protestant Priest Peker stated, "There is a mosque near our church. We have many Muslim friends celebrating our festivities. Similarly, we celebrate their festivities. We love each other and live together, and as long as we love each other, this tolerance will increase more, because tolerance is a fruit of love. People love each other, and as a result, they behave in a tolerant way."

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Turkish President Erdogan Moves Up Timeline on Democratic Elections

- Turkish President Erdogan announced that Turkey will be moving up its 2019 elections to June 2018, stating, "Developments in Syria and elsewhere have made it urgent to switch to the new executive system in order to take steps for our country's future in a stronger way", he continued, "Our preference has been to try to hold out till the date in November 2019. However, whether it be the cross-border operation in Syria, or the historic developments in Iraq and Syria have made it so that it is paramount for Turkey to overcome uncertainty."
- Turkey's Deputy PM of the Economy Şimşek, said that Turkish markets have reacted positively to the announcement to hold elections earlier than scheduled because it eliminates the year and a half window of economic uncertainty leading up to an election. This alleviates fear in the market and reassures investors of stability in the market.
- Deputy PM Şimşek, stated that President Erdogan's announcement to move up the election caused the Turkish lira to spike against the dollar and the euro, and the stock market rose over 1% in less than an hour.

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All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler

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Turkey News Update

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Robert Wexler

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Sent Items

I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Republic of Turkey.

This material is distributed by Ballard Partners on behalf of the Republic of Turkey. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

Turkey is The World's Most Humanitarian Country

- Turkey has provided \$30 billion in services to its 3.5 million Syrian refugees, and has granted citizenship to about 60,000 Syrians. Turkey has a dual policy where they are providing services to the refugees seeking shelter within its borders, as well as working to rebuild the infrastructure of Syria so that these refugees can eventually return home.
- The Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) and the UN sent 26 humanitarian aid trucks carrying beds, tents, and containers to Idlib, Syrian.
- Turkish humanitarian agencies have provided bottled water, hot meals, food packages, core relief packages, bread, vegetables and other items to over 300,000 affected refugees in Syria.
- Following the liberation in Afrin, Turkish agencies repaired the water system that was damaged by terrorists, and have restored running water to residents. An Afrin local stated "God bless Turkey. They brought us bread and water. As long as we have bread and water, we need nothing else."
- Turkey has set up an emergency hospital in Afrin that can treat up to 400 patients daily, providing emergency medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, physical therapy, ear nose and throat, radiology, anesthesiology, eye and general surgery with plans to expand to include dentistry and gynecology.

seeds and saplings, beehives, chickens and chicken feed, and agricultural tools to these communities. It has also purchased \$1.5 million in agricultural commodities from the region to help boost the agricultural sector.

- Turkey has awarded 20,000 Syrian students with scholarships to study in Turkish universities, which will allow them to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria when they return to their country.
- Turkey and the IDB are teaming up to provide eye care needs to 12 African countries. They will provide eye examinations, eye care training for healthcare professionals, 1 million cataract surgeries, build and revise operating rooms, educate ophthalmologists, and provide 10 million children with eye glasses.
- Turkey is in talks with Japan to establish a joint disaster management plan, aimed at earthquake-resistant construction, elder services and humanitarian efforts.
- The UN Director of Emergency & Rehabilitation Division Burgeon, stated, "I congratulate the Turkish government and the Turkish people on the generous way they've embraced Syrian refugees, and I congratulate them on the support that has been provided."
- Turkey and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization are continuing efforts to help the 3.5 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey, by providing vocational programs to train refugees to grow their own food and teach them skills to work in the agricultural sector, so that they have food security and a livelihood.
- A team of 67 volunteer physicians and healthcare providers in Turkey treated 7,000 Syrian refugees, providing primary and secondary medical care, 173 dental treatments, and distributing 6,000 batches of medicine. The refugee camps also provided clothes, shoes, coloring books, balloons, and food.
- The EU and UN have praised Turkey for its contribution to the refugee crisis, stating, "Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government and people of Turkey have demonstrated unparalleled generosity in supporting refugees and integrating them into national services, including health, education, employment and other municipal and social services."

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Turkey's Economy is on the Rise

- Turkey's economy increased 7.4% in 2017, which is the largest growth of G20 countries and the second largest growth of OECD countries. Its largest growth was in the industrial, services and construction industries.

- In March there was an 11.5% year-on-year increase in goods and services from March 2017, reaching \$15.1 billion, and increasing the total exports for the first quarter to \$40.7 billion. The largest volume of exports was in the automotive industry (\$3.1 billion), the clothing sector (1.7 billion), and the chemical products sector (\$1.6 billion), with 17.7% in exports to the EU.
- Turkey has exported \$160 billion in the last 12 months, which is a 10.5% year-on-year increase.
- The 2016 breather loan for SMEs has been raised to \$1.9 billion due to its considerable success in 2017, helping contribute to the 7.4% growth in the economy and creating 1.6 million jobs.
- The Turkish government is creating \$34 billion in incentives for corporate projects, which will create 35,000 jobs directly and 134,000 jobs indirectly in the areas of health, defense, automotive, and mining and metal. The incentives will include corporate tax discounts, VAT exemption, VAT refunds for building construction expenditures, a customs tax exemption, an insurance premium, and support to employ qualified personnel.
- The \$34 billion incentive package is expected to increase exports by \$6.3 billion, and decrease imports by \$12.3 billion, cutting the account deficit by \$19 billion.
- FDI in Turkey has exceeded \$180 billion in the last 16 years.
- The World Bank approved a \$91.54 million loan for the Sustainable Cities II Project in Turkey, which aims to improve financial, economic, environmental, and social sustainability.
- Turkey's industrial production rose 9.9% in February, compared to the same month last year.
- Turkey's unemployment rate fell to 10.8% in January, down 2.2% year-on year from January 2016, with a 4.3% decrease in youth unemployment, 2.3% decrease in male unemployment, and a 2% decrease in female unemployment during the same period.
- Turkey is aiming to increase its foreign trade volume to \$1 trillion, and increase gross domestic product to \$2 trillion by 2023, by increasing investments in technology and decreasing the import of high-tech products. To achieve its goal, the country will focus on projects like the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), renewable energy investments, the domestic car project, and investment in the defense industry.
- Turkish Parliament has passed numerous reforms that aim to simplify the process of setting up companies, getting construction permits, foreign trade, conducting research, and bringing in investments.
- Turkey is providing incentives to increase indigenous defense programs, including generous tax breaks, tax reductions, exemptions from import duties, additional levies, and soft loans.
- In January and February 2018, the government incorporated 13 defense investment projects, worth \$350 million, into its incentives program.

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Tourists Flock to Turkey

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/projection.aspx>

- Turkey expects to host 40 million tourists, and earn \$30 billion in tourism revenue by the end of this year.
- Turkey's tourism income increased by 31.3% in the first quarter of 2018 compared to the same quarter in 2017, reaching \$4.25 billion, welcoming more than 6.1 million tourists, which is an increase of 26.4% from the same quarter in 2017.
- Last year Turkey hosted over 32 million tourists, earning \$26.5 billion in revenue.
- Turkish airports hosted 43 million travelers in the first quarter of 2018, a 21.5% year-on-year increase.
- Turkey saw a 166% increase in shopping by Chinese tourists in the first quarter of 2018, followed by U.K. tourists with an increase of 83% in spending.
- Due to a VAT refund program, shopping by all foreign visitors has increased by some 33% in the first quarter of 2018, compared to the first quarter of 2017.
- In the annual Thomas Cook Holiday Report 2018, Turkey is named the "standout destination for summer 2018" and has landed in the top 5 most popular vacation destinations.
- Package holidays to Turkey are up 84% year-on-year, with the growth being attributed to families who account for 61% of those bookings.
- Turkey's VAT exemption is also making it an attractive location for health care tourists, with special interest in hair transplants, plastic surgery, and heart surgery.

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Turkey Works to Better Ties with European Neighbors, NATO & The UN

- The European Commission is taking joint action with Turkey to increase security for refugees, and to establish two new hospitals in Syrian refugee areas in southern Turkey.
- The European Commission spent \$991 million on the education of Syrians in Turkey in 2017, and will continue backing Turkey in their efforts to help Syrian refugees.
- Turkish President Erdogan met with top EU officials at a summit in Varna, Bulgaria, where the European Commission President Juncker promised, "I, myself, guarantee that Turkey's EU accession talks will continue".
- Hungarian Ambassador to Turkey Kiss, stated, "We appreciate Turkey for hosting nearly 3.5 million Syrian refugees. We support Turkey's EU accession process and we also praise Turkey's efforts for European Union's security".
- Turkey and France have agreed to a bilateral trade target of \$24.7 billion dollars by the end of 2019.
- NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg went to Turkey in mid-April to meet with Turkish leaders in preparation for the NATO summit in Brussels.
- NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, stated, "Turkey is a highly valued and key ally", and urged all NATO allies to support Turkey. He reiterated NATO's commitment to Turkey's security efforts and its fight against

- NATO and Turkey are working on an initiative to train Iraqi soldiers, and build military academies and schools in an effort to help Iraqis stabilize their country and fight against terrorism.
- Secretary General Stoltenberg stated that Turkey has played a significant role in NATO efforts against Daesh by providing infrastructure, and air bases close to the border with Iraq and Syria which are key in the fight against the Daesh.
- Secretary General Stoltenberg said that Turkey has continued to brief NATO on military operations and humanitarian assistance in Syria.
- NATO recognizes Turkey's legitimate security concerns in Syria and understands its addressing these threats in a proportionate and measured way.
- In a few years, Turkey will be responsible for NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), which was created as a rapid response team to move against potential risks and threats, supported by air, maritime and special forces.
- Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu attended the UN meeting on peace, where he addressed Turkey's contributions and approach to UN efforts to build and sustain peace.
- European Chambers of Commerce and Industry Chairman Leidl, praised Turkey's growth performance and said that it has serious potential in terms of trade and investment, stating, "it is also of great importance for Europe. We appreciate it and we will do our best to strengthen it."

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Turkey Enhances Bi-Lateral Relations with Balkans Neighbors

- Turkish PM Yildirim, stated, "Stability and confidence in the Balkans, in fact, means security in Europe, security in the Middle East. From that point of view, we know that there's a great responsibility for peace in all the countries of the region to preserve stability. In this context, we're striving to develop friendly relations with all other countries, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina".
- The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Chairman Zvizdić, stated, "Turkey has always been among Bosnia and Herzegovina's top 10 trade partners and among its 10 biggest investors". With a current trade volume of \$737 million, the two countries are looking to increase trade to \$1.23 billion by the end of 2019, with a special focus in agricultural products.
- Ukrainian FM Klimkin said that without Turkey and the Ukraine's cooperation, security in the Middle East and Europe could not be assured. He also acknowledged Turkey's backing of the Ukraine in Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.
- Ukrainian PM Groyzman, stated, "Turkey is our strategic partner. And strengthening cooperation in the trade and economic sphere is one of the key prerequisites for the successful development of a strategic partnership".
- Turkey is looking to strengthen ties with Belarus, and the two are hoping to increase their trade volume to \$1 billion from \$605 million.
- Belarusian Politician Voronetsky, stated, "Our country considers Turkey as a reliable friend, and a partner that has a promising future in the international area".
- A delegation of parliamentarians from several Balkans states (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Croatia and Kosovo) visited Turkey to extend their support to Operation Olive Branch and Turkish soldiers.

- A Bosnian representative in Croatian Parliament Kardic, said, "We stand with Turkish soldiers. We expect that the Turkish people and Turkish government support Balkans states."
- Kazakhstan FM Abdrakhmanov paid an official visit to Turkey to discuss all aspects of Turkey-Kazakhstan bilateral relations and regional issues.
- Azerbaijan's President Aliyev paid an official visit to Turkey where they discussed strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, as well as regional and international developments.
- Turkish President Erdoğan said Azerbaijan is set to become the leading foreign investor in Turkey, investing around \$14 billion, while Turkey has invested some \$12 billion into Azerbaijan.
- At the ninth Sarajevo Business Forum (SBF), Turkey called on its entrepreneurs to invest in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and other Balkans nations.
- Uzbekistan President Mirziyoyev and Turkish President Erdoğan met to enhance bilateral ties in politics, military operations, the economy, trade, culture, education, environment, energy, agriculture, tourism, and the defense industry.

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US-Turkey Relations Improve

- US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Kaidanow met with representatives from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense, and the Under Secretariat for Defense Industries to share the US perspective on bilateral defense trade and regional security issues, as part of the US-Turkey Defense Trade dialogue.
- The US and Turkey show signs of improved relations, as the two have started setting common security goals, are cooperating in military operations, and are working together on a plan for Syria's recovery.
- The Turkish Foreign Ministry said that the US' strike targeting Syrian President al-Assad, was an "appropriate response" to the chemical attack that killed dozens, saying, "We welcome this operation which has eased humanity's conscience in the face of the attack in Douma, largely suspected to have been carried out by the regime".
- Turkish President Erdogan, welcomed the strikes, stating, "With the joint operation by US, UK, and France on Saturday, the Syrian regime received the message that its massacres wouldn't be left unanswered".
- US President Trump and Turkish President Erdogan spoke about the chemical weapons attack in Syria, and the pending joint airstrike retaliation ahead of the operation.
- Turkish politician Ünal said there was a sharing of information between Turkey, the US, the UK, and France before the operation, and that Turkey was expecting the reaction from its allies.
- Turkish President Erdogan addressed his concerns over weapons of mass destruction, like the chemical weapons used in Syria, exclaiming, "Let's use all resources for the sake of humanity instead of using them for nuclear and conventional armament projects."
- Acting U.S. Secretary of State Sullivan briefed Turkey's Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Yalçın over the phone, on April 14 on the latest developments in Syria after the airstrike operation.
- The Permanent US Representative at NATO Hutchison, stated, "We have many talks with Turkey on this subject. I believe that there is now a mutual understanding of our positions. I think that the situation is going to be clear on both sides on what our mission is and what their mission is. I think there will be no conflict.", she continued, "We are working with Turkey to try—first of all—to assure Turkey that we are doing nothing that

- Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu met with US Secretary of State Pompeo at the NATO Summit where they agreed to approve a road map for their continued cooperation in Syria.
- U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo issued an invitation for the Turkish FM to visit Washington to continue discussions on the Syrian roadmap.

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Turkey Seeks Innovation in Technology & Energy

- Turkey has a “recycle street”, which is completely sourced by waste products, including the lighting, décor, and furnishings. This vibrant street promotes recycling, educates the community, and supports small local businesses.
- Alibaba Cloud is working on services in Turkey that will expand its suite of cloud services to include exporters, small and medium-sized businesses and other local companies in their efforts to expand their geographic reach and better compete in global trade. The extended suite of services and products will include elastic computing, database services, networking, security and middleware to analytics and big data.
- Turkey is launching its first scientific base in Antarctica next year to conduct research and raise its profile in the international scientific community.
- Turkey placed 4th in the global geothermal energy league in 2017, and has already reached its goal to achieve 1,000 MW of installed capacity by 2023, leading to its revised goal of 4,000 MW of installed capacity by 2030. It is one of the four countries that has more than 1 GW installed.
- Turkey is set to obtain 10 new high-speed trains, which will increase capacity and comfort.
- The Turkish government has invested \$4.5 billion in the aviation sector in the last 15 years, while another \$13.5 billion worth of investments are currently being processed.
- Turkey’s first aeronautical expo was held at Antalya International Airport, where \$12 billion in trade agreements were signed. In the last 15 years, Turkey has doubled its number of airports to 55, and air passengers have increased to over 200 million a year.
- Turkey is working to promote its aerospace sector and has taken significant strides toward gaining FDI in the sector. This expo formed bridges between international aviation giants, regional players, and Turkey's fast-growing airliners, manufacturers, defense contractors and government agencies.

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Easter Celebrated in Turkey

- Christian churches in Turkey celebrated Easter, holding services and Easter related festivities.
- A Priest of a Turkish Protestant church said that his town of Mardin is where people from various ethnic backgrounds and religions live together, and it should be a role model for the world.
- Mardin Protestant Priest Peker stated, "There is a mosque near our church. We have many Muslim friends celebrating our festivities. Similarly, we celebrate their festivities. We love each other and live together, and as long as we love each other, this tolerance will increase more, because tolerance is a fruit of love. People love each other, and as a result, they behave in a tolerant way."

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Turkish President Erdogan Moves Up Timeline on Democratic Elections

- Turkish President Erdogan announced that Turkey will be moving up its 2019 elections to June 2018, stating, "Developments in Syria and elsewhere have made it urgent to switch to the new executive system in order to take steps for our country's future in a stronger way", he continued, "Our preference has been to try to hold out till the date in November 2019. However, whether it be the cross-border operation in Syria, or the historic developments in Iraq and Syria have made it so that it is paramount for Turkey to overcome uncertainty."
- Turkey's Deputy PM of the Economy Şimşek, said that Turkish markets have reacted positively to the announcement to hold elections earlier than scheduled because it eliminates the year and a half window of economic uncertainty leading up to an election. This alleviates fear in the market and reassures investors of stability in the market.
- Deputy PM Şimşek, stated that President Erdogan's announcement to move up the election caused the Turkish lira to spike against the dollar and the euro, and the stock market rose over 1% in less than an hour.

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All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler