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# Turkish Foreign Policy at the Turn of the ‘Century of Türkiye’: Challenges, Vision, Objectives, and Transformation

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**ABSTRACT** *Türkiye is embarking on the ‘Century of Türkiye’ at a time of rapidly changing geopolitical dynamics coupled with ever-increasing global challenges, culminating in a complex era defined by multiple crises. Against this background, Türkiye stands out as a regional constructive and system-transformer actor seeking to contribute to a more inclusive and effective international system capable of addressing current global and regional challenges. Türkiye will continue to secure its national interests in a volatile regional and global environment, while shaping conditions for sustainable peace and development in its neighborhood and beyond. It will work towards institutionalizing its foreign relations on a structural basis, developing an environment of prosperity and advancing its global goals. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be the powerhouse in all these efforts, building upon its centuries-long tradition and going through an organizational transformation to ensure the swift and full implementation of the vision of the Century of Türkiye.*

**Keywords:** Century of Türkiye, Turkish Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy Vision and Objectives

**Insight Turkey 2023**  
Vol. 25 / No. 3 / pp. 11-25

Received Date: 10/8/2023 • Accepted Date: 22/9/2023 • DOI: 10.25253/99.2023253.1

## Introduction

I assumed my duties as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye at a turning point in Turkish history, when we embarked on the ‘Century of Türkiye’ at the Centenary of our Republic. The vision of the Century of Türkiye, developed by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,<sup>1</sup> has emerged as a concept aiming at propelling Türkiye towards a future characterized by progress, development, and global engagement while revitalizing the accomplishments of the past century with renewed vigor and enthusiasm.

This grand vision will serve as a beacon of light for Türkiye in every policy area, including foreign policy. In fact, it is already well reflected in Türkiye’s foreign policy goals and actions to establish a zone of peace, stability, and prosperity in our neighborhood and beyond. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is celebrating its quinquenary, is well equipped with its long tradition, notable human resources, and extensive web of diplomatic presence worldwide to ensure the swift and full implementation of this vision.

## Challenges in a Complex Era of Multiple Crises

The post-1945 liberal international order has prevented the outbreak of a new world war. Nevertheless, it has fallen short of offering sustainable peace and security for all. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the discussions of the world order from uni-

polarity to bipolarity, and finally to multipolarity, are the symptoms of a problem in the current global governance mechanisms. These discussions prove that current global governance mechanisms are unable to address global challenges timely, fairly, and effectively. They have instead become a battleground where the political strategies of great powers clash.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently acknowledged this fact by underlining that “today’s multilateral institutions that were created after the Second World War reflect the power and economic dynamics of that time, and so, they need reform.”<sup>2</sup> This observation resonates with Türkiye’s longstanding call for a reform of the UN and other multilateral organizations, in order to create a just and fair new order.

This call is particularly opportune at a time when escalating competition among great powers intensifies global tensions and fosters polarization on a global scale. One can see the effects of this competition across the world. The erosion of multilateralism and the rules-based order further exacerbates this ever-increasing polarization. There is a need to ensure that the underlying principles of international law are upheld. However, the UN Security Council, entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, fails to fulfill its mission. This, in turn, leaves the international system increasingly out of balance, harboring unpredictable developments, and leading to further vulnerability.

Simultaneously, the international system faces a multitude of political, military, economic, environmental, technological, and social challenges. Current challenges such as armed conflicts, terrorism, irregular migration, xenophobia, Islamophobia, climate crisis, food shortages, and cyber threats heighten each other. None of these challenges are confined by national borders and no state can tackle them alone. In the absence of efficient global governance mechanisms, the international setting is shaped by rising fragilities that are increasing globally, but especially in our region.

While the international community has significant security concerns about the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine at Türkiye's immediate vicinity, it is simultaneously dealing with the spillover effects of the war such as global inflation, economic stagnation, energy crisis, and food insecurity. Organizations with the mandate to bring forward the most needed solutions appear incapable of addressing the crisis that has arisen at the heart of Europe but is impacting the entire world.

At the same time, instead of achieving globalization on a fair basis, certain countries are moving further away from its benefits by adopting protectionism in the economic sphere. The increased global wealth is not distributed fairly on an international scale, as an important number of countries still struggle to access basic needs. Certain multinational companies' market cap surpasses the overall sum of many countries' GDPs. According to 2022

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estimates of the UN, "9.2 percent of the world population still remains in chronic hunger and 2.4 billion people faced moderate to severe food insecurity."<sup>3</sup> While the Sustainable Development Goal No. 2 envisions "Zero Hunger by 2030," the alarming trend indicates that we are rather moving in the opposite direction.

This gloomy picture is in stark contradiction with cutting-edge technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing which present vast opportunities across various domains, including the economy, security, development, transportation, and healthcare.

As a result of all these simultaneous developments, the global system experiences a complex era of multiple crises, which indicate both the pressing necessity and inevitability of change. It is now crystal clear that the

## **Türkiye seeks to contribute to a more inclusive, effective, fair, and secure international system capable of addressing current global and regional challenges; a robust system based on solidarity, rather than polarity**

international system has to undergo a substantial transformation.

### **A Vision for Türkiye as a Regional Constructive and System-Transformer Actor**

Against such a background, Türkiye emerges once again as a force for good, assuming a heightened sense of responsibility on the international stage. It stands out as a problem solver, system improver, and transformer actor in the region and in international affairs, at the turn of the Century of Türkiye.

The international system as envisioned by Türkiye, evolves beyond the traditional concept of an international order defined by polarity, whether unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar. Türkiye seeks to contribute to a more inclusive, effective, fair, and secure international system capable of addressing current global and regional challenges; a robust system based on solidarity, rather than polarity.

This is a challenging task, requiring strategic patience and unwavering determination. Türkiye, with its solid political will and increasing capabilities, is certainly well-positioned to be one of the architects of such a new international system. Türkiye's quest for a more inclusive, just, and secure global order will continue to derive from the notions of justice and conscience, engrained in the centuries-old culture and identity of Turkish people, and consequently reflected in our national foreign policy.

Türkiye is ready to collaborate with other nations to defend our shared values and fulfill our shared responsibilities in establishing an inclusive and effective international system that places high priority on human welfare, tackles economic disparities, and promotes global peace, security, stability, and prosperity.

### **Main Objectives of Turkish Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Century of Türkiye**

Protecting Türkiye's interests in a volatile regional and global environment, while also shaping conditions for sustainable peace and development in our wider neighborhood, are complementary objectives that require an integral comprehensive strategy. Establishing peace and security in our region, further institutionalizing our foreign relations on a structural basis, developing an environment of prosperity and advancing our global goals are the fundamental tenets of this strategy.

### ***Contributing to Peace and Security in the Region and Creating New Cooperation Models***

Contributing peace and security in the region is a twofold goal. It consists of efforts (i) to eliminate threats and tackle challenges and (ii) to explore opportunities for developing regional economic and political co-operation models.

Terrorism is the most significant threat to regional peace and security in our wider neighborhood. Although terrorism constitutes a crime against humanity, it is still instrumentalized as a tool for proxy wars in Syria, North Africa, the Sahel, and elsewhere. Considering the transnational nature of terrorism, it is imperative to underscore over and over the necessity of effective and genuine international cooperation in countering this scourge. Türkiye's commitment to this fight is beyond lip service. We are the only NATO ally with boots on the ground in the fight against ISIS. Simultaneously, we fight against the separatist agenda of PKK/YPG terrorist organization and its offshoots, which not only claim innocent lives but also threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our neighbors. We maintain our relentless efforts against the putschist terrorist organization FETÖ. Türkiye has the determination and capacity to conduct these battles simultaneously. We maintain our firm commitment to combating terrorism and will continue to assume a pioneering role in international initiatives in this area. However, our resolve in no way absolves others from their responsibilities.

The biggest threat to Syria's territorial integrity and political unity is the overt support given to terrorist organizations by the powers that have designs on this country. We are determined to prevent the threat of any kind of terrorist organization near our borders not only for our nation but also for regional stability.

Encouraging a political process based on Syria's territorial integrity is crucial for the resolution of the conflict and the elimination of terrorist safe havens. It is the Syrian people themselves, to determine the solution to the conflict and the future of their country. Therefore, for a sustainable solution, the legitimate Syrian opposition needs to be fully on board in this political process, in accordance with the roadmap set out in the UN Security Council Resolution 2254 defining the framework of political transition in the country. It is urgent to expedite efforts toward a comprehensive, lasting, and sustainable solution that meets the legitimate expectations of the Syrian people.

Progress in this process can also facilitate the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of the Syrians to their homes. Establishing stability as soon as possible is a prerequisite for these returns. Thanks to Türkiye's efforts, hundreds of thousands of Syrians were able to go back to their homes. While hosting Syrians under temporary protection and meeting their daily needs, we will continue to encourage their return to their homeland under the conditions above.



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hakan Fidan, attended the unofficial meeting of foreign ministers of the OTS held at the Turkish House in New York, on September 22, 2023.

MUSTAFA AYGÜN / AA

Türkiye is also the main defender of the territorial integrity and political stability of Iraq. To that end, it continues to steadfastly support initiatives aimed at eliminating terrorist groups from Iraq, with a primary focus on countering the PKK.

The Middle East has been going through a period of change and transformation in the last few years. A new self-generating balance of power is in the making. The resumption of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia was a milestone in terms of the rapprochement and normalization trends in the region. Such steps, which might be followed by others, enhance overall security, stability, and prosperity. Türkiye has already been contributing to this process by developing its relations with the countries of the region, on the basis of mutual will and interests. Consequently, a

relatively favorable environment prevails in the Middle East, despite persisting demographic and socio-economic challenges. Robust structural reforms and cooperation are needed to overcome these challenges and offer a promising future to the youth, which constitute the largest demographic group in the Middle East. The pressing challenges as well as threats emanating from terrorist organizations compel the states in the region to join their forces. Only as such, they can meet the socio-economic needs of their people, overcome income disparities, and focus on investing in new and clean technologies as well as R&D, innovation, and digitalization. In brief, cooperation between the states in the region is a *sine qua non* to deliver to the people.

On the other hand, lasting peace in the Middle East can only be possible

through a fair and lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which remains one of the biggest global injustices of our time. This is why we will continue to support the Palestinian people in their struggle for their legitimate rights on the basis of international law. A two-state solution with an independent and contiguous Palestinian State, based on 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, will also provide for Israel to find the peace and security it seeks.

A pressing challenge that needs to be overcome for European and global security is the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. Its detrimental consequences not only affect the warring parties and the region but also resonate globally. We have maintained our facilitation/mediation efforts since the outbreak of the war. A year-and-a-half afterwards, it is still essential that we prioritize diplomacy and dialogue to put an end to the human suffering. Türkiye will continue to use all its political and diplomatic channels towards that end. We will step up our efforts to end the war through diplomacy and dialogue, based on Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.

In the meantime, we will also maintain our efforts to revive the Black Sea Initiative. Around 33 million tons of grain products delivered to global markets within the framework of this Initiative contributed largely to global food security and reached out to areas where the threat of global hunger persists. The revival of this Initiative

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is also intertwined with the security of the Black Sea basin.

Our African Partnership Policy is a showcase of our multidimensional, enterprising, and humanitarian foreign policy. It is based on a holistic, inclusive, equal partnership, and mutual respect. Türkiye is actively taking steps to stand with the African Continent in the face of significant political, economic, social, and security challenges. These steps are solely based on mutual benefits and in support of the principle of "African solutions to African problems." Türkiye believes that the Continent needs to have its proper say in global governance and this is why we strongly supported the recent G20 membership of the African Union.

The establishment of global peace and security depends on the stability of Africa, especially considering that coups, armed conflicts, terrorism, climate change, food security, and migration enhance fragility in the Sahel region.

**In the period ahead, we will strive to strengthen our cooperation with the U.S. on a wide span of areas and on the basis of common interests, as it is crucial for the maintenance of peace and security in our neighborhood and beyond. Nevertheless, the *sine qua non* for such cooperation is the spirit of allied solidarity**

To achieve lasting peace in Libya, it is vital to hold transparent, fair, and free presidential and parliamentary elections, underpinned by a broad consensus and without any further delay. With this understanding, Türkiye will continue its sincere efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability, while preserving the country's social unity and territorial integrity.

We have launched a process with Armenia, aiming at good neighborly relations and full normalization. At the same time, we act with the motto "One People, Two States" and further deepen our relations with Azerbaijan in all fields, guided by the Shusha Declaration signed by the two Presidents in June 2021. From the very outset, we have supported the negotiation process between Azerbaijan and Armenia. We hope that Armenia will take sufficient advantage of this

historic opportunity before us and a new chapter of peace, prosperity, and cooperation will be opened in this region consequently.

South Caucasus has long suffered from conflicts and lagged behind in back in today's globalized world in fulfilling its untapped potential. The time has long come to change this outlook for the region. There remains a lot to be done from de-mining to re-building in a state-of-the-art way. In this respect, Türkiye is ready to invest in rebuilding the region through various infrastructure and connectivity projects, once the conditions are ripe. Given the leading position of Turkish companies in the global construction market, Türkiye does not only possess the will but also the capacity to do so. Once the infrastructure is well-established and the region is well-connected to the rest of the world, everybody in the region will receive their dividends in every area from trade to energy security, tourism to new investments and employment. The swift opening of the Zangezur Corridor will be vital in this respect. When it is in full operation, this road will lead to more prosperity for all.

Türkiye has deep historical and cultural ties with Iran, living side by side in peace for centuries. As two leading countries in the region, we are willing to strengthen our bilateral and regional cooperation with Iran, especially in the fight against terrorism in our geography. The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Turkish-Iranian High-Level Cooperation Council to be held during

the upcoming visit of President Raisi will be crucial not only for enhancing our border security and fight against terrorism but also regarding issues on our positive agenda like trade, energy, transportation, and higher education.

The Afghan people, who have been going through difficult times for half a century, are in dire need of humanitarian assistance and support, regardless of political motives. Türkiye is committed to standing by the Afghan people, who have long suffered from years of conflict and instability. This was the motive behind keeping Turkish diplomatic missions functioning in the country. Resurgence of armed struggle must be avoided at all costs and the opposition needs to be included in the governance of the country. An inclusive government, in which all segments of the society will be represented; and full respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls and their equal and meaningful participation in society are prerequisites for sustainable economic and political development, social cohesion, stability, and peace in the country.

Türkiye continues its efforts at the bilateral, regional, and international levels to strengthen peace and stability in the Balkans and to resolve existing conflicts through dialogue. As a country that is both an integral part of the region and trusted by other nations therein, Türkiye plays a constructive role in initiatives that contribute to the peace and prosperity of the Balkans, which rest on a delicate

balance. Türkiye emphasizes at every opportunity its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is of vital importance for peace in the entire region and actively supports the processes to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

In all these geographies, Türkiye is ready to work together with its neighbors, friends, and partners not only to eliminate threat but also to serve jointly as regional engines of stability and growth. In other words, we wish to advance our relations with all countries in our region through a positive agenda. This will also have a positive spillover effect to the benefit of the entire region and thus turn into a “win-win-win” formula.

Our relations with Greece are no exception. The current positive atmosphere offers a valuable opportunity to find solutions to contentious issues and to explore ways and means of cooperation based on a positive agenda. There is a big potential in different areas, extending from economy and trade to people-to-people contacts, civil protection, and relief efforts. Without compromising its legitimate rights and interests, Türkiye is genuine in this endeavor, provided that Greece reciprocates with the same sincerity. As such, we can foster mutual trust and turn this current positive political climate into a sustainable one.

Another game-changer in the Eastern Mediterranean will be the solution to the Cyprus issue after 60

years, through the reaffirmation of the inherent rights, sovereign equality, and equal international status of the Turkish Cypriots and the recognition of the independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

### ***Further Institutionalization of Foreign Relations***

Our second goal is the further institutionalization of our foreign relations on a structural basis. This goal is also twofold: strengthening our existing strategic relations and establishing new ones.

Türkiye has a longstanding strategic partnership with the U.S. as a NATO ally. Despite certain differing points of view, our interests and approaches overlap in several regional and global issues. In the period ahead, we will strive to strengthen our cooperation with the U.S. on a wide span of areas and on the basis of common interests, as it is crucial for the maintenance of peace and security in our neighborhood and beyond. Nevertheless, the *sine qua non* for such cooperation is the spirit of allied solidarity. This requires boosting, not undermining each other's national security.

Türkiye considers the transatlantic link crucial for security and prosperity in Europe. As a leading NATO member, Türkiye contributes fundamentally to the principle of "the indivisibility of security." We will maintain our 360-degree perspective as regards the challenges facing the Alliance. Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is one of the two fundamental threats to NATO. In this

vein, we will keep the fight against terrorism high on the agenda of the Alliance in line with the NATO Strategic Concept adopted during the Madrid Summit, which stipulates that "countering terrorism is essential to our collective defense."<sup>4</sup>

Membership in the European Union remains a strategic priority. The increasingly complex nature of regional and global challenges dictates, now more than ever, to advance Türkiye's accession process. If the accession negotiations are purely technical, as they are supposed to be, then they need to progress on their own merits, not being hijacked by the political motivations of certain members. Enlargement has once again gained momentum due to geopolitics, then leaving Türkiye behind will be nothing but a strategic mistake. Our long years of negotiations with our EU counterparts have raised the question of whether Türkiye's accession negotiations do not progress on a merit-based methodology and whether it is identity politics or the size of Türkiye's population that shapes the Union's ambivalence towards Türkiye. The EU needs to uphold the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* and maintain a merit-based accession process towards a common future instead of viewing Türkiye as a competitor in different areas and a transactional partner in the wake of challenges that it can not cope with by itself. We expect the European Union to finally adopt a visionary approach and swiftly start fulfilling its long-neglected obligations towards our country. On the other hand, we

have already started to give a new boost to our reform efforts.

The Organization of Turkic States (OTS), a forward-looking and promising project that embraces the cultural heritage of Turkic civilization, serves as a prime example of our efforts for stronger institutionalization in foreign relations. The Organization plays a key role in reinforcing the unity and solidarity of the Turkic World by strengthening mutual trust, intensifying political solidarity, accelerating economic and technical cooperation opportunities in the Turkic world as well as promoting our common historical and cultural heritage. The willingness of several countries and regional organizations to engage with the OTS serves as a testament to its success as well as potential. There is a huge untapped potential for OTS; the “Turkic World Vision-2040,” adopted at the 8<sup>th</sup> Summit in İstanbul in 2021, calls for further institutionalized collaboration. In line with this call, Türkiye will continue to advance this Organization in its pursuit of deeper levels of integration. In this respect, TURAN Special Economic Zone will be a landmark in our cooperation and integration efforts.

It is among our priorities to improve cooperation with Islamic countries. “The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)” has huge potential at all levels to promote regional development. Even though the D-8 Organization focuses on the economic development of the region, it is limited to 8 countries. It would be better to

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expand the OIC by institutionalizing the OIC towards an institutional platform for economic integration and development. That will boost the economy of the region, which at the end will improve good governance and regional security.

### ***Development of an Environment of Prosperity***

Our third goal is to develop an environment of prosperity. A robust and self-sustaining Turkish economy with access to global opportunities will enhance the economic prosperity of not only the Turkish people but also their neighbors, friends, and partners around the world. Therefore, the economic component of foreign policy will receive specific attention in the period ahead.

In line with its aim of becoming one of the top ten economies of the world, Türkiye will diversify and deepen commercial and economic relations with all parts of the world. High and critical technologies, including the defense industry, will constitute priority areas in this process of deepening and diversification. This capacity, as it is shared with our allies, helps

**In summary, the organizational transformation and other latest developments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflect a proactive approach by being “a smart institution” and adapting itself to the ever-changing landscape of global affairs, while remaining loyal to the know-how it has distilled through centuries**

reduce tensions, de-escalate conflicts, help counter-terrorism efforts, and thus serve regional stability.

Four fundamental freedoms, namely the free movement of goods, people, services, and capital will be another priority area. In this respect, we will intensify our efforts to update the Customs Union and for completing the visa liberalization process.

As investing in connectivity projects in energy, transportation, and logistics means investing in a prosperous common future, these networks also contribute to building trust and better mutual understanding through cooperation. Türkiye supports and takes part in such connectivity projects. In the period ahead, we will consolidate our position as a hub in the energy and transportation corridors, and increase our connectivity capacity. We will prioritize projects such as the

Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) and the Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor, which constitute the most convenient and reliable routes in the fields of energy and transportation. As such, we will make concrete contributions to the energy and supply chain security of all the people in the region.

In the same vein, we are committed to contributing to connectivity efforts, including the Development Road project with the efforts of Iraq and our partners in the Gulf region, an inclusive project with long-lasting strategic benefits for the region and beyond. Participation of Türkiye will have a multiplier effect as regards the viability of any project aiming at regional connectivity.

### ***Advancement of Global Goals***

Our fourth goal is to further boost our policies towards different geographies while offering solutions to global problems.

Latin America and the Caribbean are regions where we mobilize all the elements of our humanitarian foreign policy, and where our ties of friendship are strengthening day by day. In the forthcoming period, we aim to transform these relations into a Türkiye-Latin America and the Caribbean Partnership Policy.

Our Asia Anew Initiative, announced in 2019, has become a symbol of our will to further advance our relations with Asia, on the basis of mutual benefit and common objectives. As the easternmost European and west-

ernmost Asian country, we see huge potential and will continue to explore opportunities in a wide range of cooperation areas such as trade and investments, transportation, logistics, and infrastructure under the Initiative, with a view to contributing to the development and prosperity of the region.

The theme of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly “Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Global Solidarity”<sup>5</sup> fully coincides with Türkiye’s global goals. We took the opportunity of this Session to renew our call upon all countries to display a strong will for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Now, more than ever, we should come together as a global community to address the challenges we face and work towards a more peaceful and prosperous future. Such a future needs to be built by ensuring that no one is left behind in an inclusive and interconnected world. Türkiye maintains its belief that a fairer world is possible and strives to that end as one of the most generous countries in the world in terms of humanitarian aid.

We continue our support to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in all aspects. While we support humanitarian aid to the region, the demands and the political horizon of the Global South are far beyond immediate needs. It is also about injustices and unfair global governance systems. Therefore, we attach high importance to the re-organization

initiatives of the Global South. Such initiatives will not only enhance the capacity of the regional countries but also provide sustainable development, tackling poverty and ensuring food security. Our Latin America and Africa policies are in line with this perspective.

The Zero Waste Initiative, launched under the auspices of First Lady Emine Erdoğan, constitutes another significant contribution to sustainable development efforts and combatting climate change. We will continue to follow up on this Initiative, which has been globally embraced through the UN General Assembly resolution adopted in 2022.

Another global problem that requires utmost attention is the new epidemic of racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia, especially in Western countries. These alarming trends demonstrated in hate crimes are certainly among the greatest threats to social peace and harmony and universal democratic values. It is unacceptable to see the inaction vis-à-vis the burning of the Holy Book of a religion that started with the first verse “Read!” It is appalling that these trends and actions, which violate the essence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, persist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, we do not and will not stand idle in the face of these dangerous trends. Türkiye will continue to support initiatives to combat Islamophobia on all platforms, in particular the United Nations, the OSCE, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

## The Transformation of the Foreign Ministry and Policymaking

All these tasks ahead of us are colossal and require constant adaptation. This is why the acceleration of the organizational transformation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been a priority since my first day in office. This ongoing organizational transformation has included restructuring various departments and investing in modern technologies in order to enhance efficiency in foreign policymaking and implementation, by becoming more agile and proactive in the face of evolving global dynamics.

Today, international affairs are no longer confined to diplomacy in its classical sense. Security, defense, intelligence, economy, trade, finance, energy, environment, culture, communication, and health are all part and parcel of an intense and complex web of international relations. In parallel to the proliferation of these intertwined areas, new actors and stakeholders are also brought to the fore. All these developments have broadened the portfolio of Foreign Ministries at a global scale. They have also compelled the Foreign Ministers to take a more active role in coordinating national positions with line Ministries and other relevant institutions.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is no exception. It is entrusted, *inter alia*, with the efficient coordination of all foreign relations. Thus, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue in the period ahead to fulfill

this task with a view to ensuring that Türkiye speaks and acts with a single voice in foreign relations. This offers a more holistic, cohesive, and coordinated approach to diplomacy and international affairs, but also ensures that foreign policy decisions taken in different policy areas are implemented swiftly and coherently.

New technologies enable the development of revolutionary tools for executing diplomacy and shaping foreign policy. Having launched the Digital Diplomacy Initiative in 2019, the Ministry capitalizes on the huge potential of digital technologies, be it strategic foresight, early warning, public diplomacy, or consular services. We will prioritize the further development of the digital skills of our diplomats at different levels.

Adapting to change and innovation requires career-long learning. Our Diplomacy Academy will play a pivotal role in this respect. It will assist the transformation of the Ministry by offering in-service training to diplomats, equipping them with the necessary digital as well as non-digital skills and tools to address complex challenges effectively.

In order to enhance diplomacy's ability to navigate the complexities of the global stage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is crucial to strengthen analytical capabilities and broaden horizons towards strategic foresight. In this respect, the exchange of information with the civil society, academia and think tanks enriches the daily work of diplomats and vice versa.

This is why maintaining and developing ever-closer ties with relevant and prominent stakeholders will continue to be a priority. The Ministry's Center for Strategic Research (SAM) will continue to be an intermediary between think tanks and academia, while at the same time playing a capacity-building role for think tanks.

In summary, the organizational transformation and other latest developments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflect a proactive approach by being "a smart institution" and adapting itself to the ever-changing landscape of global affairs, while remaining loyal to the know-how it has distilled through centuries.

## Conclusion

As Türkiye embarks on the Century of Türkiye, its foreign policy is reshaped to address the complex challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century more effectively. In the face of pressing challenges, Türkiye recognizes the importance of assuming responsibility as a system-building actor on the international stage and will continue to act accordingly. It will be at the forefront of efforts towards a more inclusive and effective international system, based on its inherent national values.

The transformation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs towards that end demonstrates a commitment to adjusting to changing global dynamics, improving organizational efficiency, and further bolstering diplomatic capabilities. Through improved coordi-

nation and cooperation, Türkiye seeks to present a unified and coherent foreign policy agenda on the global stage. It aspires to be a beacon of stability, prosperity, and justice, contributing to a more equitable and secure world order, and is poised to play a more influential and proactive role in shaping the global landscape as such with determination and dedication. ■

## Endnotes

1. The 'Century of Türkiye,' developed by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is in his own words: "A comprehensive roadmap that will raise our country above the level of contemporary civilizations... the resolution to make our nation's century-old dreams come true and march towards even greater goals... the manifestation of the 85 million joining forces and building their future with the spirit of the Independence War. See: "The Century of Türkiye Is a Comprehensive Roadmap that Will Raise Our Country above the Level of Contemporary Civilizations," *TCCB*, (May 31, 2023), retrieved September 25, 2023, from <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/147352/president-erdogan-attends-event-marking-the-161st-foundation-of-the-turkish-court-of-accounts>.
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