

TODAY'S BUSINESS

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German Ambassador to Turkey
Eckart Cuntz

GERMANY'S PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN SEEKING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN TURKEY

Interest in economic congress a sign of trust

İBRAHİM TÜRKMEN, İSTANBUL

The third Turkish-German Economic Congress, whose goal is to increase and deepen trade between Turkey and Germany, brings together over 200 German businessmen with thousands of Turkish entrepreneurs and is also laying the groundwork for cooperation in many fields including automotive, machinery, tourism and agriculture.

Speaking to Today's Zaman, many pioneers in the business world said there were deep ties between the two countries and that the congress

would strengthen them. Commenting on the interest shown by German businessmen to this commercial bridge, President of the Foreign Economic Relations Council (DEİK) Rona Yırcalı said Turkey's economic relations with Europe would continue to grow regardless of the developments in its EU membership process. He said high-ranking managers of prominent German firms are participating in the Turkish-German Economic Congress.

"The participation of these prominent figures of the German economy in the congress is an indicator of the confidence in the Turkish economy when

there is such a short time left before the elections."

He added that Turkey had covered a great distance in terms of quality and trade volume in exports, pointing out the importance of entering a market where consumers and investors as selective as Germany exist. The president underlined the importance of producing more under better conditions, with better materials, and in a more competitive manner in order to import more to Germany.

Chairman of the Turkish Confederation of Employers' Unions (TISK) and chairman of the board of Sanko Machinery Rızanur Meral said Turkey's machine

industry had been making great headway in recent years. Meral noted Germany could be solution partners with Turkey owing to its rising production costs, despite its high technological and quality standards.

"Germany has tried to balance its production costs, rising due to environmental laws and high labor costs, by establishing partnerships with Eastern European countries. However, it couldn't find the quality it was looking for," he said. This congress is very important for Turkey, which can cover this need, Meral noted, adding he had strong faith that the congress would produce important results. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 14**

Germans believe in Turkey's EU bid more than the Turks themselves

KERİM BALCI, ANKARA

The relations between Germany and Turkey are a near-constant subject of discussion. Some sectors of the Turkish public regard German Chancellor Angela Merkel as being the partner of French President Nicolas Sarkozy at the head of the "Turkey out of EU" camp, while on the other hand Turkey was guest country at industrial fair Hanover Messe 2007 and will be the special guest of the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2008. This amusing and confusing picture is sure to be in the minds of participants at the Third Turkish German Economy Congress. Today's Zaman wanted to clarify this picture through an interview with German Ambassador Eckart Cuntz. It seems the picture in Mr. Ambassador's mind is crystal clear - and that he foresees an even brighter future than that envisaged by many optimistic Turks.

Mr. Ambassador, how would you describe Turkish-German relations?

German-Turkish relations are excellent, I would say. The most important factor in our bilateral relations is the almost 3 million people of Turkish descent living in Germany. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 16**

Turkey: New favorite destination of German airline companies

While Turkey is already one of the most visited countries by German tourists, tourism experts expect Turkey will gain even more popularity in the coming years. Foreign airline companies, including German flag carrier Lufthansa, Condor, LTI, Hapag-Lloyd and low-cost subsidiary airlines such as Hapagfly and Easyjet, are competing to gain more shares in the Turkish aviation market. Experts relate growing airline interest to Turks living in Germany and European citizens who like to travel. Sweden-based FlyMe, Slovakia-based Sky Europe and Hungary-based Wizz Air are believed to be discussing ways to enter the Turkish market as well. Four new airline carriers are expected to begin operating in Turkey in the 2007-2008 time table. "This market is very important for us," said Lufthansa spokeswoman Stefanie Stotz, adding that European airlines closely follow the tourism potential in Turkey. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 16**



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sit in the cockpit of a Turkish Hema tractor during their opening walk through the Industrial Fair Hannover Messe in Hannover, Northern Germany, on April 16, 2007. Turkey was a partner country of this year's fair.

CONGRESS TO BRING TURKISH, GERMAN BUSINESSMEN CLOSER TOGETHER

Under the chairmanship of the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TD-IHK), the Turkish-German Economy Congress brings together leading politicians, bureaucrats and business world leaders under the same roof with the cooperation of the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodities Exchanges (TOBB), the German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) and the German-Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AHK).

The third economy congress summit is being

held at the Grand Cevahir Hotel and Congress Center June 22-24 to strengthen the cooperation between Turkey and Germany, to sort out important issues between the two countries and to offer new solutions. The congress, which is expected to bring together over a thousand participants and 200 German companies, was held last year in the German capital of Berlin with the participation of both countries' prime ministers.

Dr. Rainhardt Freiherr von Leoprechting, chairman of host organization TD-IHK, after stating that

the friendship of the two countries is reflected in the world of economy, said: "The Turkish-German Economy Congress is a powerful economy congress in addition to its political aspects." Von Leoprechting added: "For many companies, Turkey is an important developing market. Germany is a launching pad for Turkish companies to access European markets. We would like to strengthen and establish long-term business relationships in wide range of areas." He noted that the trade volume between Turkey and Germany is increasing by double digits. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 11**

Turks in Europe rapidly becoming entrepreneurs

İSA YAZAR, ANKARA

While the stable growth maintained by the Turkish economy during the five-year term of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) is watched by the world with envy, Turkish entrepreneurs living abroad realize innumerable successful projects.

According to a study by the Center for Turkish Studies (TAM), "Economic Power of Turkish Entrepreneurs in the European Union and Germany," Turks who go to those countries to work often become entrepreneurs, starting from the second generation. The research revealed that the number of Turkish businessmen operating all over EU member states has exceeded 100,000. Projections suggest that 160,000 Turkish entrepreneurs will be successfully living in EU member states in 2015. Essen-based TAM envisages that this number will surpass 200,000 by 2023. Thus Turkish entrepreneurs will be employing over 1 million people by the 100th anniversary of the republic. The main breadwinner of one in 10 Turkish families is self-employed, the research also revealed.

Turkish entrepreneurs operate in almost every sector, unlike other ethnic groups in Germany. According to the research it is possible to classify other ethnic groups under four main categories. They mostly work as food vendors, operate small tailor's shops, travel agencies or restaurants. In contrast with this, Turkish entrepreneurs carry on their economic activities successfully in 115 different sectors all over Europe. Having realized numerical as well as a qualitative development, Turkish businesses operate in a wide spectrum of sectors, from small kiosks to restaurant chains, from small tailor's shops to massive textile corporations, from ticket sales offices to big travel agencies, etc. Therefore entrepreneurs of Turkish descent are considered the dynamo of the "ethnic economy" in Germany as its largest ethnic group of entrepreneurs. The survey also indicated that the number of Turkish entrepreneurs increased more rapidly than Turkish population in Germany. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 14**

Turkey's first professional seashore cleaner is a German

The polluted seashores of Turkey, which line three sides of the country, have become a gateway to work for Germans. The most recent example of this is with Wolfgang Jurgen Hinz of Germany, Turkey's first professional seashore cleaner.

While Turks still head to Germany for work opportunities, Hinz arrived in Turkey and found work for himself in an area that no one really had any experience in there. Hinz's efforts at cleaning up the polluted Mediterranean shorelines have also created work opportunities for five other people. Hinz, who used to work cleaning German parks and children's gardens, is quite satisfied with his job in Turkey, which started two years ago. He describes his arrival in Turkey, saying: "One of the Turkish workers with whom I worked in Germany told me that the coastlines here were very dirty and polluted and that there was a great opportunity for work here. I came and checked it out, and it was really true. I looked into it, talked to a number of hotels. They told me that they would support my efforts. And so I came to Turkey and founded the first technical seashore cleaning firm, Mateco."

Hinz does his job with the help of special machines he has mounted onto the backs of tractors brought in from Italy. With six vehicles at his disposal, Hinz uses high-technology machines that clear not only the surface of the sand but up to 15 centimeters on the beaches. Hinz charges between YTL 70-150 per 100 square meters of cleaning and currently works for 60 hotels in Alanya-Tekirova. Hinz, who notes he would be pleased to also work along the Aegean if there were a demand, says that since 2005 he has cleaned up 100,000 square meters of beach coastline in Turkey.

Hinz also notes that "Turkey has beautiful coastlines but does not know their value," stressing that local municipality crews do not attach enough importance to cleaning the beaches. According to Hinz's observations, there is no one working solely on cleaning the coastlines in Turkey other than himself. He also talks about future plans, noting that he would like to get involved not only in more cleaning, but also in separating out different kinds of beach trash from one another, and setting up some sort of storage facilities. He is hoping to extract some sort of support from local municipalities for all this.

Hinz points to the importance for hotels to be able to offer a clean beach to hotel guests, adding: "Hotels that used to approach my work hesitantly now understand its importance. At first we had a very difficult time convincing the hotels here. The owners used to complain about the expense involved in our work. But they were ignoring



PHOTO: SABAN GÜNDÜZ

their most precious assets, while not even blinking at spending thousands of dollars on a five-minute fireworks show. So after the big hotel owners began to understand the importance of beach cleanliness, they started to line up for our services. Most of the big hotels have started having their beach coastlines cleaned once every two weeks now."

Calling his opportunity and its work an "unparalleled opportunity for hotels," Hinz notes that coastline cleanliness in Turkey has begun to develop along with his own work in Turkey. Hinz says some of the items that crop up most often as he cleans include cigarette butts, stones, pieces of wood, plastic objects, needles and syringes. From time to time he even finds jewelry. Hinz offers a brief comparison between work on the environmental arena in Turkey as opposed to in Germany: "In Germany, 1.5 million people are employed in jobs that involve investment in the environment. ... Germany has lived out its past, and Turkey has its future. Turkey, in terms of areas of work, has great promise in the future, particularly where its ecology is concerned, which is why we have come here. The ecological investments which took place in Germany 30 years ago are just now taking place here. Though you can find credit support in many arenas for work in Turkey, it is still difficult to find credit for investments being made in the environment. This is linked to the fact that there are almost no investments in the environment in Turkey." Hinz also notes that he is curious about who exactly is using the funds supplied by the EU to Turkey for the purpose of helping the environment.

Hinz, who resides in Antalya, not only concerns himself with cleaning up the seashores there; in the winter, he is also involved in working with the Antalya Intercultural Dialogue Center (AKDIM). **Saban Gündüz, Lütfi Aykur Antalya**



PHOTO: DVA

GERMANS START TO AWAKEN ŞANLIURFA, TURKEY'S 'SLEEPING TOURISM GIANT'

Şanlıurfa, which has never really received the same interest from locals that it has garnered from outsiders, is increasingly being publicized by visitors and experts from Germany. The first step was taken by German archeologist Professor Klaus Schmidt, who has been carrying out digs in Şanlıurfa since 1995

YAHYA ÇARK ŞANLIURFA

Şanlıurfa, which has never really received the same interest from locals that it has received from outsiders, is increasing being publicized by visitors and experts from Germany.

The first step was taken by German archeologist Professor Klaus Schmidt, who has been carrying out digs in Şanlıurfa since 1995. Şanlıurfa Mayor Ahmet Esref Fakbaba noted: "We often see how much value the Germans attach to our history. There is a sleeping tourism giant in this region of Turkey." He asserted that Şanlıurfa, the fourth sacred city in the Islamic world after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, is also a place that Christians and Jewish people want to visit.

Turkish tourism, which has for a long time been stuck in the "sea-sun-sand" triangle, is not getting its share of cultural tourism because it is not giving enough publicity to its own historical and cultural treasures, despite their inherent potential. While the popularity of cultural tours -- which are often preferred by wealthier groups over other kinds of tours --

is spreading in other countries, Anatolia, often considered the cradle of civilization, has yet to blossom.

Fakbaba complained that despite the fact that Şanlıurfa "is a place that many religions see as sacred," it still suffered from a dearth of visitors. He spoke about how it used to be that people setting off on the Hajj would stop in Şanlıurfa, sometimes called Urfa, and see the famous Balıklı Lake (Fish Lake) where Abraham is said to have been born, and where King Nemrut later attempted to have him killed.

But Şanlıurfa, known also as the city of prophets, is important not only to Islam, but also to Christianity and Judaism. With the Tomb of Ayyub and Well of Moses testament to its historic and sacred ties to both religions, Şanlıurfa is also home to the Göbekli Tepe, which has ruins of stone temples built 11,000 years ago -- thought to be the oldest in the world.

When German archeologist Schmidt began his digs here in 1995 he took Şanlıurfa's historical value to another level. The remains found at the time started to attract the attention of foreigners, including investors interested in possible cultural and historical tours of the city. Fakbaba noted that even now, talks are under way with international banking company Morgan Stanley regarding tourism facilities in the city. Fakbaba added that, closer to home, famous Turkish singer Ibrahim Tatlıses seems to have single-handedly shouldered the responsibility for publicizing Şanlıurfa. However he bemoaned the fact that the city administration had their "hands tied" financially and were powerless to do much for their city's promotion.

Fakbaba spoke about upcoming German attempts to publicize Şanlıurfa, saying: "There will be a tourism trade fair in Karlsruhe [in Germany] from Jan. 20 through June 17. Sixty percent of this trade fair will be devoted to Göbekli Tepe and Urfa. Our municipality and governorship have been invited to participate in this trade fair and Urfa's history and culture are to be talked about there. It is expected that 150,000 people will visit this trade fair."

The mayor noted that it is German archeologist Schmidt who is taking the lead in the steps to promote Şanlıurfa, and that German tourism companies are currently planning on building five-star cultural tourism facilities in the city. He noted that the primary goal of the upcoming trade fair is to promote the historical and natural beauties of the region to Germans in advance of this enormous investment.

"It seems to be foreigners who understand the true value of Şanlıurfa. Tourists are coming in from Europe, wanting to visit Göbekli Tepe. Despite the lack of roads and facilities, they are still climbing the mountain. There are many, many people in Urfa -- or all over Turkey -- who don't even know about these treasures. Even just the fact that the world's oldest temple remains are here is enough to raise the level of cultural tourism in Urfa. And now that these archeological digs have taken place, the interest expressed by foreigners towards Urfa is constantly rising. In particular there are requests for investment in hotel and centers aimed at faith tourism. German and American groups keep arriving to examine the historical remains here. Studies on feasibility for these investment projects have already begun," Fakbaba said, mentioning Morgan Stanley.

If a loan of \$50 million were to be extended to the city municipality it would be earned back in just two years, the mayor added. He noted that such a loan would easily transform Şanlıurfa into Turkey's cultural tourism capital.

Fakbaba also noted that a 500,000 euro loan from the US has been already spent by Şanlıurfa on urban regeneration projects. Comparing Şanlıurfa to a patient, Fakbaba said: "For a doctor it is a source of great pride when a very ill patient can stand up and start walking. This is how I see the situation in Urfa."

In recent years there has been a steady increase in tourism to Turkish cities like Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Konya and Trabzon, all with distinctive cultural fabrics of their own. Turkey, which already earns significant income from its coastal resorts, also has enormous potential in terms of cultural tourism. According to figures from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the number of tourists visiting Turkey for cultural or faith tourism is increasing each year.



Şanlıurfa Mayor Ahmet Esref Fakbaba



Zukunft: A bridge of dialogue between Turks and Germans

The world is getting smaller and more and more people share ever fewer resources. Once clearly divided and distanced cultures grow closer and more interconnected with each passing day. Scientific and technical developments move with the speed of light. We are confronted with new and urgent societal and ethical challenges and we have to find new and sustainable solutions -- solutions that guarantee harmony; harmony between cultures, harmony between religions, harmony between men, and harmony between humanity and its environment. We need ideas, incentives and models. We need people who think beyond tomorrow. We need people who think past frontiers. We need people who think. In June 2006 a group of young sociologists, linguists and cultural scientists from Turkey, Austria and Germany established a forum for people who think beyond. This is the first edition of the monthly

magazine "Zukunft" (future) was published. Since then this magazine has been a platform for new perspectives, intercultural dialogue, critical questioning and astonishing answers. Authors and interview partners from America to Asia and from Africa to Europe, scientists from all branches, philosophers and theologians, members of political parties and organizations all get the opportunity to explain their point of view and show their solutions and answers. "Never cynical, always constructive" is the motto of the editorial crew. Their philosophy is not only to inform people, but to move them; to move their hearts and their minds. They want to contribute to a better understanding between cultures, for the prevention of the self-fulfilling prophecy of the clash of civilizations, for a world that is more peaceful, more sustainable and more harmonious than our world is today. They know: The future starts now. **Almanya Today's Zaman**

Konya: Turkey's rising industrial center

Konya, the site of the oldest known human settlement, Catalhöyük, has long been a very significant trade and accommodations center on the route of the Silk Road. Today the city provides 9 percent of Turkey's total agricultural production, thereby earning it the title "the granary of Turkey." In addition Konya is steadily advancing toward becoming Turkey's industrial capital. Possessing one of Turkey's largest industrial zones, it is a rising industrial center with around 32,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). Konya's industrial investments in recent years and the stable structural growth it has realized have greatly contributed to its becoming a city attracting the attention of many national and international investors. In fact it has been chosen as the runner-up in the category of City with the Best Economic Potential in a contest held every two years by The Financial Times' Foreign Direct Investment magazine, which evaluates many European regions and cities such from Vienna to Zurich, Lazio and the Canary Islands.

Today Konya is not only a city with a great economic potential, but also a city in whose future everyone puts their trust. As a matter of fact, while Istanbul is Turkey's commercial capital, Konya is rapidly advancing toward becoming Turkey's industrial capital. In Konya everything in over 80 different sectors, from the mechanical and chemical industries to textiles, from automotive spare parts to electric and electronic devices and from the packaging industry to the shoe and glass industries is manufactured using the most advanced technology. Over the last decade in particular Konya took a very promising position in the production of automotive spare parts, Turkey's share of which in the world markets is speedily growing. The total number of enterprises operating in the field of automotive spare parts in the city is 345. Konya has also become an important place in the sector of foundry work, which provides intermediate input to a large number of industrial sectors.

Konyan enterprises today realize nearly \$1 billion in exports to 106 countries in 39 different product lines. The Konya Industrial Zone (KOSB) employs 15,000 people while providing 500 million euros to the economy per annum. Built over a 16 square kilometer area of land off the Konya-Ankara and Konya-Aksaray state highways at a distance of 20 kilometers from Konya city center, the zone will expand by a further nine square kilometers in the near future.



PHOTOS © CHIRAN



PHOTO © AA

Tahir Büyükelhvacigil, the board chairman of the KOSB and the Konya Chamber of Industry (KSO), stated that 99 percent of Konya's industry comprised SMEs. Noting that the KSO members had the capacity to manufacture 107 million automotive spare parts to international standards each year, Büyükelhvacigil said, "Our target is to become the new center for the automotive sector." There are 345 firms manufacturing automotive spare parts in Konya, 241 of them registered with the KSO. The automotive spare parts manufacturers employ 2,500 people; the yearly revenue of the Konya automotive sector has reached \$8 billion.

Many companies affiliated with the auto industry are advertising themselves by featuring product replicas in promotional materials such as key rings.



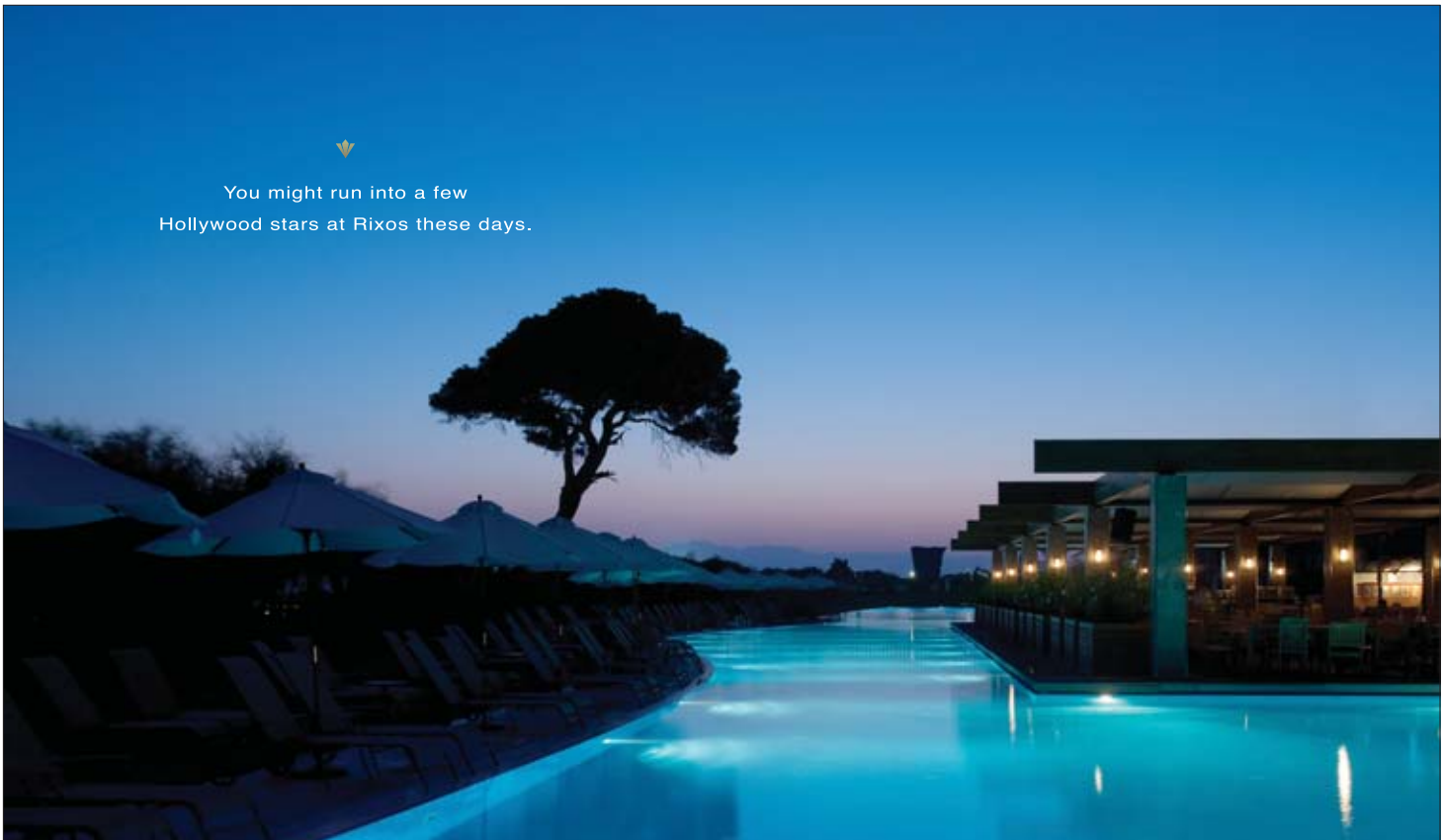
Konya Chamber of Industry
Chairman Tahir Büyükelhvacigil

Why invest in Konya?

The capital of Anatolia (with its historical attractions and entrepreneurial spirit);

- Low risk of economic crises;
- Teknokent (Selçuk University Technology Development Zone);
- Selçuk University, with its lecturers who specialize in multifarious fields, particularly in different fields of engineering, and 90,000 students;
- Strategic position between the East and the West;
- It is the "granary of Turkey";
- Extensive flat areas with low rents;
- The biggest (physically) province of Turkey;
- Very low earthquake risk;
- Dry climate that allows high metal durability;
- Ever-increasing qualified workforce;
- 80,000 workers in industrial districts;
- Industrial sectors with advanced production techniques.

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INTEREST IN ECONOMIC CONGRESS A SIGN OF TRUST

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Chairman of Turkish Association of Travel Agents (TURSAB) Başaran Ulusoy said relations between the two countries were developing in an atmosphere of trust. Germany has become a second homeland to the 3 million people of Turkish origin there, he noted. Ulusoy added the Turkish-German Economic Congress and similar organizations had made great contributions to the development of bilateral relations.

It is not accurate to describe trade relations between Turkey and Germany as being based simply on routine buying and selling. From Turkey's perspective its relations with Germany are wide enough that they cannot be limited to trade, although trade is obviously a significant aspect of the whole picture. In both imports and exports Germany is Turkey's largest trading partner. The same cannot, however, be said for Turkey in terms of how it stands for Germany. In terms of exports Turkey comes 17th on Germany's list. For imports Turkey stands in 20th place for Germany. At the top of the list of products sold by Turkey to Germany -- which is Europe's largest economy, and globally, the third after the US and Japan -- comes textiles and textile products. Following this are automotive and automotive-related products. In terms of Turkish imports from Germany, high-performance machines, equipment and electronic goods come at the top of the list.

While Turkish companies recorded \$5.25 billion in exports to Germany in 1997, a decade later this figure has increased by nearly 80 percent. By 2006 Turkey reached a level of \$9.68 billion in exports to Germany. 2003, in particular, attracted attention here as an important breakthrough year.

During the same 10-year period, developments in imports from Germany followed an up-and-down course. In 1997 \$8 billion worth of goods and services were bought by Turkey from Germany. In 2003, when export levels jumped, imports also increased and rose to a level of \$9.45 billion. From last year, \$14.58 billion worth of German goods entered Turkey.

Looking at trade relations over the past 10 years, it is clear, with the exception of one year, there is a gap in favor of Germany. In the year of the financial crisis in Turkey, 2001, there was only a \$30 million trade balance gap between the two countries, but in 2006 the gap reached a record \$4.9 billion. In terms of Germany and Turkey's percentage shares in each



other's foreign trade levels, these have headed downward with each passing year, despite the increase in the actual amount of goods going back and forth. In 1997 Germany's total share in Turkey's exports was 20 percent, while in imports this figure was 16.5 percent. Even though export percentages continued to rise until 2000, after this year they began to decline. In 2006 only 11.3 percent of Turkey's total exports were to Germany. A significant change that took place in Turkey's general foreign trade strategy played a significant role in this change. With increasing importance placed by the ruling Justice and Development (AK Party) administration in Ankara on foreign trade with neighboring and regional countries, and with a great increase in demand from these countries and others, Turkey's export level jumped 120 percent in a short period. Parallel to this, Germany's share in Turkey's foreign trade also fell.

The percentage rates of imports from Germany have fallen in conjunction with total Turkish imports since 1997, and from 2006 onward have dropped to 10.6 percent. Only a decade ago this figure was 16.5 percent. In terms of the drop in import percentages -- despite the increase in actual amounts -- the factor with the greatest

effect has been the unexpected rise in energy prices. With prices for a barrel of oil rising at one point to nearly \$80, the energy bill for Turkey has been inflated.

Tourism

According to recent figures from the UN World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) January 2007 World Tourism Barometer, Germany spends more money than any other country on travel and tourism. Germany at the same time traditionally sends the most tourists to Turkey. These figures include both Turkish immigrants to Germany residing there as well as ethnic Germans who want to take advantage of Turkey's natural and historical sites. The number of German tourists visiting Turkey in 1991 was around 780,000, jumping to 1.17 million in 1992. Though there were slight ups and downs in the years that followed, these numbers have in general increased over time. In 2005 the number of Germans visiting Turkey went above 4 million for the first time. In 2006, despite factors like the World Cup taking place in Germany, bird flu scares and bombings in Turkish resort areas, again, the number of German tourists visiting Turkey was 3.7 million. In short one in every five tourists visiting Turkey is German.

German investments in Turkey

Among EU countries, Germany has made the greatest investment in Turkey. Between 1954 and 2002 there were 2,900 businesses in Turkey owned by an EU country. Of these 982 were German-based companies. But since 2004 these numbers started to rapidly increase. In 2006 in particular, German enterprises and investments in Turkey reached all-time highs.

Investments by Turks in Germany

It is clear that many of the Turks who began arriving in Germany in the 1960s as "guest workers" had settled permanently by the 1980s; their investments in Germany began to increase from this time onwards. This situation has meant while Turks arriving in Germany arrived as workers, they have turned into employers over time. As of 2003 there are around 57,000 Turkish operations in Germany. The average investment for one of these operations is around 116,000 euros, making a combined total of 6.8 billion euros. The annual turnover for these Turkish operations in Germany is around 27 billion euros and an average of 5.1 people are employed in each of these businesses.

Trade with Germany in Turkey's total trade (%)

	Export	Import
1997	20.0	16.5
1998	20.2	15.9
1999	20.6	14.5
2000	18.6	13.2
2001	17.1	12.9
2002	16.3	13.7
2003	15.8	13.6
2004	13.8	12.8
2005	12.9	11.7
2006	11.3	10.6

Turkey-Germany foreign trade (billion dollars)

	Export	Import	Balance
1997	5.25	8.02	-2.77
1998	5.46	7.32	-1.86
1999	5.47	5.88	-0.41
2000	5.18	7.20	-2.02
2001	5.37	5.34	0.03
2002	5.87	7.04	-1.17
2003	7.48	9.45	-1.97
2004	8.75	12.52	-3.77
2005	9.46	13.63	-4.18
2006	9.68	14.58	-4.90

Source: Foreign Trade Undersecretariat

German tourists visiting Turkey

1991	779,882
1992	1,165,164
1993	1,118,748
1994	994,268
1995	1,656,310
1996	2,141,92
1997	2,389,529
1998	2,283,749
1999	1,388,787
2000	2,277,505
2001	2,881,443
2002	3,481,691
2003	3,305,044
2004	3,985,141
2005	4,240,122
2006	3,762,469



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Turks in Europe rapidly becoming entrepreneurs

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The number of Turkish entrepreneurs was 23,000 in 1986, but today it has reached 68,300, in the same period the Turkish population increased to 2.7 million from 1.4 million. So in contrast to the nearly twofold increase in the ethnically Turkish German population, the number of entrepreneurs rose threefold.

Turkish entrepreneurs operate almost everywhere in Germany. For instance economic indicators show that Turkish-descent businessmen operating in German cities sell products or services in almost all districts. Even though many of the businesses were established in the last five or 10 years, they have already attained significant economic thresholds in terms of macroeconomic values. The annual trade volume of those 68,300 people in Germany today totals 31.6 billion euros. Although most of the businesses are family-owned, some grow into major enterprises.

The research also found that the Turkish enterprises provide chances for those emigrating

from Turkey to have a foothold in the market. They have also developed a business market of their own. These enterprises present a vocational perspective to not only their family members or those from the same ethnic background, but also to everyone in search of a decent job. The current number of non-Turkish people employed by Turkish companies in Germany is 335,000.

The study also showed that entrepreneurs of Turkish descent have long moved on from serving only Turks. Forty-four percent of the customers of such entrepreneurs are Germans. Some 35 percent of those who participated in the research said that there was a balance between the number of their Turkish and German customers, while only 19 percent said that their chief customer group consisted of Turks. An overwhelming majority of these entrepreneurs are able to mesh with their surroundings both professionally and culturally. More importantly, most of them are young. The average age of entrepreneurs of Turkish descent in Germany is just 37.7 years.



Mustafa Baklan, originally from Turkey's Çorum Province, is a famous Turkish entrepreneur who markets his Baktat brand products in Europe via his 12 companies and 1,300 employees located in Germany.

PHOTO TODAY'S ZAMAN

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GERMANS BELIEVE IN TURKEY'S EU BID MORE THAN THE TURKS THEMSELVES

German Ambassador in Ankara Eckart Cuntz trusts the strength of Turkish-German relations and foresees an even brighter future. About Germany's stance on Turkey's EU membership, Cuntz recalls that the German public is more optimistic than even the Turks themselves regarding Turkey's eventual accession to the EU

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Furthermore the large number of German tourists traveling to Turkey each year, some 4 million visitors annually, is another contributing factor. Both aspects shape the images that both peoples have of each other, resulting in a relationship of unique intensity. The best proof of the quality of our bilateral relations was the international industrial fair in Hanover, which was jointly opened by German Chancellor Merkel and by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Is it true that Germany's stance on Turkey's EU membership has been changed by Angela Merkel's chancellorship?

The German government has a very clear position regarding the Turkish accession process; Germany has always supported the negotiations process. We do not just pay lip service to this; the German support is very real and tangible, in particular during the German EU Presidency we succeeded in bringing forward the negotiations in many ways. Of course the outcome of the negotiations is open-ended. But the negotiations have an objective.

What about the German public? Are they supportive of Turkey's membership or not?

As in many European countries and -- as a matter of fact -- in Turkey itself, the issue is controversial. With some 3 million people of Turkish origin living in Germany, we know that whatever happens in the EU-Turkey relationship will have a direct impact on Germany. Therefore this issue is very important to us. Interestingly enough in a recent poll a majority of Germans believed that Turkey will eventually become an EU member state. That is more than in Turkey itself. People on both sides should do more to increase the understanding of each other and also to work against existing prejudices. We must learn much more about each other.



German
Ambassador
in Ankara
Eckart Cuntz

How do you see the integration process of the Turkish community in Germany? Is it a successful process or does it still spell problems?

The Turkish community in Germany is large and very complex. We can find many people who have successfully integrated into German society. More than 60,000 businesses run by people of Turkish origin testify to this. We assume that some 700,000 people of Turkish origin have acquired German nationality. There are a number of noteworthy success stories and names that everybody knows and ad-

mires both in Germany and in Turkey: Successful businessmen like Vural Oger and Kemal Sahin, writers like Feridun Zaimoglu, artists like Fatih Akin and Muhabbet, politicians like Cem Ozdemir, young successful girls like Aylin Selcuk and so on.

On the other hand we know that some people in the Turkish community have not succeeded to integrate and feel isolated. Others may not even try, but prefer to stick to their own community, not learning the language or the local customs. The German government has engaged in very

promising efforts to strengthen the integration of people of Turkish origin living in Germany. I just want to mention the Integration Summit, which has the beginning of an ongoing dialogue, and the Islam Conference. Both foreign ministers have founded the Ernst-Reuter-Initiative for cross cultural understanding and hundreds of universities, schools and organizations work every day to bring our two peoples together even closer.

Therefore the efforts of the German government to strengthen integration of minorities are

very important. The Integration Summit and the Islam Conference are visible signs of these efforts.

Do you think the cultural relations between the two countries are as good as they potentially could be? Our cultural relations are very close. We have very strong ties in the areas of education, science and arts. The Ernst-Reuter-Initiative that I mentioned before is an excellent framework in which to achieve even closer ties in the area of media, education, science and arts; this will enhance our mutual understanding. As the most important project we plan to open a German-Turkish university in Turkey.

Germany is the largest trading partner for Turkey and even though Turkey's foreign trade capacity has increased and sources are diversified, Germany's share in total trade continues to increase. Why is that?

You are right; Germany remains the most important economic partner of Turkey with an annual volume of more than 23.5 billion euros. There are now more than 2,700 German companies active in Turkey. And I think this growth will continue.

First of all, because Turkey is a strongly growing economy with competitive products, everywhere around the world -- and also in Germany -- you will find interested business partners. Secondly, the German economy is not only the biggest in Europe, but also the most important market for Turkey -- in the heart of Europe. Social and economic reforms in Germany in recent years have made our country even more competitive and therefore we attract more business. Thirdly, the very close human ties between our two countries translate into mutual trust and help forge many blossoming business relations. The Hanover fair, which I mentioned at the beginning, is a good example for this unique relationship.

A taste of Mediterranean: bliss at Bera Alanya

The Bera Alanya hotel has opened its doors to welcome those wishing to enjoy the natural beauty of the Mediterranean in a family-friendly environment.

The third member of the Bera hotel group, after the Bera Konya and Bera Mevlana facilities, Bera Alanya offers service "without equal" to those who want to spend their holidays close to nature but in maximum comfort.

Immediately attention grabbing with its grand facade, the hotel doesn't disappoint with its interior design. Each room is decorated to exacting standards, with comfort the ultimate goal. The rooms are all at least 42 square meters in size and are fully fitted with all the appliances and facilities needed to enjoy a relaxing holiday.

Bera Alanya has a 1,000-bed capacity, including 69 family rooms, 10 honeymoon rooms, eight senior suites, four grand suites, four rooms specially equipped for the physically handicapped and one 400 meter square King Suite for special guests. The hotel also has several grand halls, with 70, 90, 120 and 1,000-person capacity; technical equipment and personnel are available to meet the

needs of a wide spectrum of services, from weddings to company meetings.

Not limiting the holiday fun to sunbathing, Bera has reserved a special area for sporting activities, including fitness centers. The hotel took into consideration the comfort of families coming for their holidays and constructed separate pools for women and men, with the former also boasting beauty and relaxation centers. As well as separate covered pools, the hotel's women's only terrace also boasts a 3,000-square meter open pool. Besides the pools, the hotel has separate beauty and spa centers, saunas and Turkish baths for men and women. The hotel benefits from various entertainment programs and activities for children. The hotel is easily accessible and sited 120 kilometers from Antalya airport.

Mehmet Han Copur, general manager of Bera hotels -- owned by Kombassan Holding -- said that their goal is to increase the number of hotels to 10 by the year 2010. The immediate plans include hotels for winter holidays in Malatya and Kayseri; the Bera Alanya hotel is open all year round. **Antalya Today's Zaman**



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'It is so Praktiker to do everything'

Praktiker is one of the oldest retail chain stores in the Turkish market. It was the only construction market and the store of decoration materials of Turkey for years, and it managed to make the market in Turkey a more attractive place for later-comer investors by introducing a whole new shopping culture to Turkish consumers who were not used to this concept. We spoke with Werner Müller, Praktiker Turkey's director general, about Praktiker's activities in Turkey and the retail sector.

How did the Praktiker adventure start in Turkey? What is the position of Praktiker today? And what is the status of your relationship with the Metro Group?

Praktiker started off in 1978 with four DIY (do-it-yourself) stores in Germany. Today, the Praktiker Group has well over 400 outlets and 27,000 people employed in nine countries. Each year the Praktiker Group opens around 20 new stores in eastern and southeastern Europe. In Germany, the position of the group is stronger than ever following the acquisition of the Max Bahr chain. After its separation from the Metro Group, Praktiker was floated on the MDAX index of the German stock exchange in 2005. Operating in Turkey since 1998, we are currently serving our customers with a total of eight stores and more than 750 employees in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Gaziantep, Konya and Adana. The first market of our enlargement projects for 2007 will be opened in August in Etilik, Ankara. Located in the Antares Alsvseriş ve Yasam Merkezi, the Etilik market will be our second in Ankara. We are still working on new openings scheduled for the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008 elsewhere in Turkey.

What is your opinion about the Turkish retail sector? Could you compare it with the German market?

The organized retail sector under which the DIY market falls has been growing for the past 10 to 15 years. The DIY sector is a small part of the organized whole of the retail sector, but there is already big competition in the sector. We believe this competition will contribute to the advancement of the whole sector. Taking this aspect into consideration, we can say that the DIY market will have an important place in the organized retail sector in Turkey. Today, the target audience of DIY markets is not male customers, but also the women and families visiting the markets. In Europe 87 percent of the customers are male. But in Turkey half of the customers are male and half of them are female, namely because Turkish women love their home and like to spend their time there. Turkey is a high potential country and a promising market for the DIY sector because of its young and dynamic population, quick urbanization and the development of its construction sector. "Do-it-yourself" is a new concept for Turkey, but Turkish customers welcome new ideas. So, I think this is a good sign for the expansion of the sector in several years. When Turkish customers start to learn the DIY concept better, the interest in DIY stores will also grow.

What is the contribution of foreign retailers to the Turkish economy?

The retail sector in Turkey has shown a fast recovery from the 2001 economic crisis. Improvements in the economy, decreases in inflation and interest rates, and especially the successful sales promotions of retailers speeded up this recovery. Consumer spending



increased and is currently boosting the retail sector.

In this picture we can't take the growing role of foreign players in the retail sector into consideration. With the know-how of foreign retailers, the sector is becoming more consolidated and more global each day. Wal-Mart has declared its interest in Turkey, and other players have started to open new stores.

How will the retail sector be affected in the near future along with conditions of competition?

There is no doubt that Turkey is a promising country for foreign retailers and developers. Inflation is falling and economic output is rising, which makes Turkey a booming market. Also the young population with its demand for modern retail and modern shopping centers rekindle foreign retailers' interest. In Turkey there is enough space for new players and investments. As I mentioned we also plan to open new markets in the near future, such as the one in Etilik.

How is your relationship with your suppliers? What are the problems? What are the advantages and disadvantages of supplier networks in Turkey?

At Praktiker Turkey we work with more than 400 local suppliers, which accounts for more than 95 percent of our total suppliers. If we add the Turkish companies that are distributors of foreign goods and the offices of foreign companies in Turkey, the numbers of suppliers reaches approximately 500. We try to have long-term partnerships with our suppliers, and we prefer brands that Turkish customers demand, know and trust. The products of Turkish suppliers account for more than 90 percent of the sales of Praktiker Turkey. Markets provide 60 percent of product range from local suppliers and 40 percent from foreign suppliers. The main reason we prefer Turkish suppliers is the quality of their products. We always support our suppliers in the global market. The number of Turkish suppliers who produce for the Praktiker chain in other countries is increasing every year. These Turkish suppliers -- manufacturing products from bath to sanitary installations, textile to tile and carpets -- are successful in the global market.

Tesco has started to open branches in other cities because they think İstanbul is a 'tough city.' What do

you think about this?

This is a matter of choice. We have also opened our first market in Ankara. But we believe that İstanbul is promising city for all DIY markets. The construction sector is developing. There are new houses, living areas all around İstanbul. People like to invest in real estate and they love to decorate their homes. This is a great opportunity for DIY markets to invest in İstanbul. We are planning to raise our number of stores in İstanbul in the near future. Anatolia is also a promising market. We know the potential and need for home improvement markets in Anatolia, so we have invested in cities with growing economies, such as Gaziantep, Adana and Konya.

What is the marketing strategy of Praktiker? Does Praktiker determine its marketing strategy according to the shopping culture of the country or does it adapt its global vision to the country? How does the retail market solve these barriers?

This year we determined the marketing strategy of Praktiker Turkey as: "Her şey yapmak çok Praktiker," which means "Doing everything is very Praktiker." Since we've been operating in Turkey, we've learned a lot from the Turkish customers. We develop ourselves and our services by listening to our customers and analyzing their expectations, shopping cultures and traditions. As we are a home improvement market in four cities in Anatolia, thus it is very important to understand local needs. So we launched our new marketing campaign. We believe that the DIY culture is the future of Turkey. We foresee this trend today and invest for the future. "... Çok Praktiker" is the first step.

With our new campaign we aim to make the DIY concept more attractive and common for the Turkish customer. Everybody wants to have a beautiful house and to do this they need an easier, better and affordable way to meet their needs. So our new image campaign may be just what the Turkish customer needs because they are open to new ideas, love their homes and to renovate their home. With our new campaign we will try to change the way of thinking in decoration and telling consumers that doing it themselves is very economic, practical and very Praktiker. **Faruk Can** İstanbul



Praktiker Turkey General Manager Werner Müller said local suppliers accounted for 95 percent of their total sales.

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**TÜRKİYE
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KATILIM BANKASI

TURKEY: NEW FAVORITE DESTINATION OF GERMAN AIRLINES

▶ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Lufthansa introduced its subsidiary, Germanwings, as an alternative low-cost carrier. Germanwings has scheduled flights to Turkey from airports in Cologne/Bonn, Stuttgart, Berlin-Schönefeld and Hamburg. Stotz said Turkey's aviation market is generally very lucrative.

Lufthansa, which is one of the largest airlines in the world, recorded 40.2 million passengers between January and September 2006, a 3.6 percent increase from the previous year. The spokeswoman said Lufthansa's main market is the northern Atlantic and Asia; however, Turkey remains an attractive market for them. In 2003, Lufthansa's low-cost Germanwings made 150,000 million euros in sales in 2003 and over 650 million euros in 2006. In the event that avian flu or another epidemic breaks out, Lufthansa and the other airlines have alternative plans. "However there are no signs of such problems in the near future. That's why it would be wrong to say anything now. In the event of a risk, like other airline carriers we as well will create new alternatives. But generally speaking, we are interested in Turkey," Stotz said.

While German airlines are showing interest in Turkey, Turkish airline carriers are beginning to seek opportunities in Europe, in particular Germany. Turkish Airlines (THY), which was invited to join the Star Alliance on Dec. 9, 2006, has scheduled flights to 927 cities in 162 countries. THY CEO Temel Kotil said membership in the Star Alliance would make the airport in Istanbul the "silk road." Noting that THY is continuing to grow in the global market, Kotil assured they would continue to seek opportunities in foreign markets.

Pegasus, the Turkish charter airline purchased by Ali Sabanci in January 2005, began scheduled flights to and from Antalya, Stuttgart, Munich, Nuremberg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Hannover, Düsseldorf and Lübeck in July 2006, flights from Istanbul



The first flight of Lufthansa Airlines to Turkey was 50 years ago in parallel to the development of relations between two countries. The passengers of Lufthansa Airlines' Munich-Istanbul nostalgia flight were welcomed by a Janissary Band at Atatürk Airport as part of 50th anniversary celebrations.

Sabiha Gökçen airport to Stuttgart in December 2006 and flights to and from Munich, Düsseldorf, Nuremberg, Zurich and Vienna in April 2007.

Most airline companies offer promotional fares. For example, Pegasus has adjustable fares as used by most European and American airlines, and SunExpress has scheduled flights. Izmir Airlines (IZair) also has plans to begin flights to Germany.

Local representatives of the civil aviation sector are optimistic about competition with German companies. Representatives note that Pegasus is preparing to grow in the German market. Europe-Turkey Tourism Council Chairman Hüseyin Baraner said Turkish airline carriers have strong competitive power. Serdar Bolukcu, Onur Air's Germany coordinator, said German airlines have turned their interest to-

wards Turkey as a result of "market shrinkage" in Europe in recent years. Noting that Turkey is not the "main market" for German companies, Bolukcu maintains this conjectural interest will subside over time. According to Bolukcu, 600 flights were scheduled from Antalya to Germany last year but dropped to 400 as a result of the bird flu and the murder of a priest in Trabzon. "At that time, German airlines im-

mediately turned their attention to other destinations such as Spain, Italy and Portugal," he said.

However, tour operator and Golden Holiday's Frankfurt Manager Kayhan Gezer said Turkish airline companies have been harmed by the competition in the market, forcing many to look for new opportunities. Ben Tour Accounts Manager Mustafa Toluyay said Turkish companies should unite against foreign companies. "If we act together, we will be more effective," he asserted.

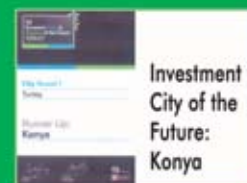
Turkish aviation market grew 20 percent

The Turkish civil aviation market, which grew 20 percent in 2004, recorded 4 million passengers in 2005. According to the Turkish Civil Aviation General Directorate (SGHM), airlines increased from 150 to 261 in 2002 and flights increased by 375 percent. With an increase in privately owned airlines in 2003, international institutions modified their Turkey expectations. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) expected Turkey to reach 50 million passengers by 2015, but that figure was realized in 2005. SHGM General Director Ali Anduru said their target for 2007 is 75 million passengers as long as economic stability and oil prices remain relatively around the same.

Germans are tourism champions

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2004 statistics shows that Germans continue to hold the tourism championship title. In 2004, Germans spent \$71 million on tourism and Americans \$65.6 million. The top destinations most traveled to by German tourists are France, Spain, the US, China, Italy, Britain, Hong Kong, Mexico and Austria. In popular destinations in the Aegean, Turkey ranks sixth on Germany's list. According statistics of the Union of German Travel Agencies (DRV), there were 300,000 tourists in Turkey in 1985 and 4.2 million in 2005. *Istanbul Today's Zaman*

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In the beginning we were obstructed in trade, now we are unique

Kerem Özcelik, the owner of the Trendfabrik brand, combines the generosity of Anatolian culture with German trade principles. With 300 employees and 35 trainees of Greek, Malaysian, Thai, German and Turkish origin, to name a few, in his chain of stores he offers young people colorful shopping with various brands and friendly staff. He has received awards from local German authorities



PHOTO: AHMET ÖZAY

AHMET ÖZAY MANNHEIM

Turkish businessmen in Germany have realized achievements that promote Anatolia's colorfulness and gives information on our country's greatness. This pride is sufficient for us. Successful steps are not limited to Eczaçbaşı's buying of Villeroy und Boch, a ceramic giant in Germany that is considered the Mercedes of the sector. Anatolia's colors are not only decorating Germany in the auto and ceramics areas but with textile designs as well. Contributing to this color is young businessman Kerem Özcelik, who told us about Trendfabrik.

This is a standard question, but how did you enter business?

Since jeans were forbidden during the Ecevit era, my father started a jeans trade between Germany and Turkey. I was 15 years old. He had an accident and died. I was trying to build my future by going to school on the one hand and the store my mother was trying to continue running on the other. I helped my mother at the store during my school years, and when I turned 18, started to deal in cars. I have been visiting my father's store since I was six years of age.

You said "my deceased father"...

We lost our father in 1984. My father died in an accident. This changed our lives. I had two younger siblings, Ferhat and Asli. Wholesalers stopped sending us goods, and we had many debts. We didn't have a Gewerbe -- a work permit. The store permit was in name of some German. We were in a very difficult situation. My mother didn't have a permanent residence permit. She went to the Foreigners' Office and explained the whole situation: "We have debts that we would like to pay back," she said. "We don't want to go bankrupt. This is our work and residence permit situation. Give us a chance." The officers there told her the thing she was doing was wrong. But they helped us; they issued a Gewerbe for my mother and gave her the permit for the store.

What were you selling at that time?

We were selling jeans, just like today. We were in the center of the city. I was aware that the financial conditions in the center of the city were hard. So I told my mother, "Let's get out of the city, somewhere near the industrial zone on the highway, just like in Turkey." It was 1990.

How is your business now?

Now we are in the process of transferring our business into the "concept store" system. We are in the forefront. The trade activities we started in the Mannheim and Heidelberg regions are spreading to big cities such as Darmstadt and Cologne. We are preparing to increase the number of stores to 12. We sell only brand name goods in our stores.

What is the difference between you and existing stores?

The first is the fact that our stores are trendy, just as our name is, or let's say they are modern stores. Since we are out of town, our customers do their shopping without facing parking and traffic problems. Since our operating costs are low, we offer our brand name products at below-market prices. Our employees welcome our customers with a smiling Mediterranean face and vividness. If our customer wants, we can send the altered product to the address the customer gives at any time as free of charge.

Who are your customers?

Our customers are young people who care about fashion, design and attire. We don't have standard customers. There are 70,000 people carrying our customer cards. Out of these, 95 percent are Germans.

Do you have a brand?

We use "Life Style" as a shoe brand. We allot space to French and Danish designs as well. Much of our work is to observe young people on the street and noticing what they wear.

Did you get any support while you were doing this?

On the contrary, we have been obstructed and have faced obstacles. For instance, the local mayor didn't take us seriously in the beginning. He used to say, 'You can't do it, you'll fail.' However, he changed his opinion after he saw what we have done here. When we moved our main store here, bought surrounding buildings and our facilities reached 10,000 square meters in size, the mayor recognized us. As you know, it wasn't easy to get yourself accepted. The mayor who used to dislike us now is presenting us as an exemplary business. In the beginning, we were not welcomed. Now we are unique.

What have you achieved and what have you failed to achieve? What would you like to say at the end of this interview?

Our aim is to lay out a brand in Germany. We see ourselves as a German company. We want to fill our obligations toward this country. The success of this country is our own success. This is how we see it. That's why we recommend our youth preserve their Turkish identity; they should aspire to a future in which they feel responsible toward Germany. We want them to accept our brand and products as this country's brand and products. There is no reason that Germans should envy us. For example, when I go to Austria I don't fill my gas tank there; I fill it in Germany. I use a Siemens telephone. Look, Schröder liked us. We like Germany. We want some smiling faces. Let them love us; we already love Germany. I pay millions of euros in taxes to Germany. I am proud of it. But when, as a person who pays millions of euros to this country I can't acquire a visa for my grandmother to come to Germany, then I feel sad.

What is Trendfabrik?

Trendfabrik is a store chain owned by Kerem Özcelik, who was born in 1969 in Ankara. Özcelik came to Mannheim with his parents when he was one year old. His father started a jeans business between Turkey and Germany. In 1984, Özcelik's father, Ceyhan Özcelik, died in an accident. 15-year-old Kerem Özcelik had to continue his life with his mother, Nevin, and siblings without their father. He opened stores one by one and became the owner of a chain of nine Trendfabrik brand stores. He employs approximately 300 employees.

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GERMANY'S AMBIGUOUS INFLUENCE ON TURKEY-EU RELATIONS

AMANDA AKÇAKOCA

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Relations between Germany and Turkey have deep roots stretching back over centuries. It was the Ottoman and German empires that divided the Balkans and Eastern Europe between them. Germany is Turkey's most important economic and commercial partner within the EU. The volume of bilateral trade, worth 14 billion euros annually, has doubled in the past 10 years. There are nearly 1,100 German companies operating in Turkey, and over 3.5 million German tourists visit the country each year. There are an estimated 2.5 million Turks living in Germany with approximately 600,000 of them having already become German citizens. Many Turks have also become involved in German politics and two German members of the European Parliament -- Cem Özdemir and Vural Öger -- are of Turkish descent.

Germany has also played a big role in Turkey's relationship with the EU, although not always a positive one. Back in 1963, at the time of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's government, the then European Economic Community (EEC) concluded an Association Agreement with Turkey commonly known as the Ankara Agreement. The then president of the European Commission, Walter Hallstein, a German Conservative, said at that time, "Turkey belongs to Europe. Turkey should become a full member of the community. This wish and the fact that we are in agreement with our Turkish friends are the strongest expression of our unity."

In the following years European integration did not figure particularly highly on Turkey's agenda as the country witnessed many ups and downs, including a military coup d'état in 1980, which led to the suspension of the Association Agreement for eight years. By the time the European Community (EC) featured on Turkey's radar again, Christian Democrat Chancellor Helmut Kohl was in office in Germany. Kohl steadfastly believed there was no place for Turkey at the EC table. On April 14, 1987, under President Turgut Özal, who strongly believed Turkey needed a symbolic confirmation of its Westernization, Ankara applied for full membership of the EC. It was rejected two years later. Kohl had warned Turkey beforehand that they would not be successful claiming that "at the present time neither Turkey nor the EC can be easily integrated."

Over the next decade Turkey continued to push for candidate country status, but at the Luxembourg Summit in 1997, the EU once again made it clear that the time was still not ripe, even though Turkey had signed a customs union with the EU a year earlier. Ankara felt humiliated that they had in effect been bypassed by the former communist countries of Eastern Europe. Mesut Yılmaz, the then Turkish prime minister, accused Chancellor Kohl of "intolerable delaying tactics" deliberately sabotaging Turkey's application and Turkey then refused to attend the European Conference held in London in April 1998. The relationship between the two NATO allies plunged to a real low and Ankara for all intents and purposes froze its relations with the EU.

And then some shards of sunshine came out from behind the clouds. With the change of government in Germany in 1998, a new era in Turkey-EU relations began. Socialist Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, together with his Green

Party Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, became one of Turkey's most ardent supporters. At the European Council under the German presidency in June 1999 Schröder pushed hard for Turkey to be given candidate status. He was not successful then, but at the Helsinki Summit in December Turkey finally won through, which eventually led -- following an unprecedented series of reforms in Turkey -- to the opening of accession talks in October 2005. Although public opinion in Germany was not particularly in favor of Turkish accession, the Schröder-Fischer partnership stuck to their guns and played a critical role in first obtaining a date for the opening of talks and then ensuring the EU stuck to its commitment when some other member states began to question the implications of what Turkish accession would mean. One may ask the question of why was Schröder so in favor of Turkey, which he always claimed was "one big investment." There could be a number of reasons -- he believed that a democratic Turkey committed to European values would be clear proof that there is no contradiction between the Islamic faith and an enlightened, modern society. He saw the economic and geopolitical benefits that the EU would reap with Ankara in the club. He was also close to Günter Verheugen, the then enlargement commissioner,

who surely influenced Schröder. Furthermore Schröder was always skeptical to deepening, but for widening, of the club.

However in the later years of Schröder's chancellorship Germany became badly split on whether Turkey should join the EU, which fuelled controversy in the run-up to country's 2005 general election. When Christian Democrat (CDU) leader Angela Merkel became chancellor there was concern over Turkey's accession process, given that the party is opposed to Turkish accession and rather favors some type of "privileged partnership." The CDU is opposed to having a large Muslim state in the EU -- particularly in light of Germany's own poor performance in integrating the Muslims that already live in the country -- and rather prefer to emphasize the union's Christian origin. On the other hand, however, one could say that Merkel, who is rather a progressive personality, could personally be more open to Turkey as a member state but that this stance does not find a majority in her party yet.

Nevertheless Merkel, given her country's large Turkish population and the commitments made previously by the EU to Turkey, pledged not to disrupt talks, although at the same time she stressed the results of the talks should remain "open ended." Of course Merkel may not have been so forthcoming if she had not been forced to make a coalition government with the Social Democrats. Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier has in particular been a vocal supporter of Turkey.

Slowly the talks moved forward and one negotiating chapter was opened in June 2006.

Then relations hit the rocks. A crisis over Cyprus plunged the EU into another spat with Turkey as Ankara refused to open its airports and harbors to the Greek Cypriots until the EU delivered on the promises it made to Turkish Cypriots to lift their economic isolation. For six months to all intents and purposes the talks ground to a halt and Ankara was told to meet its legal obligations under the customs union, otherwise its EU journey may come to a premature end. There was never any real risk that the EU would suspend talks, but rather that they decided to freeze eight negotiating chapters at the December 2006 Summit. Germany, together with the then European Council president, Finland and the UK played a key role in getting those countries who wanted Turkey to face a bigger punishment to fall into line.

With the beginning of the German European Council Presidency in 2007, Merkel committed to take steps to move the talks forward and away from the stalled situation of the previous months. Indeed the EU needed to prove that the talks with Turkey had not come to an end. Germany also undertook to make progress on the lifting of economic isolation of Turkish Cypriots long promised by EU leaders. So far only two new chapters have been opened, although more progress has been made at a technical level. Turkey was set to open a further three chapters later this month, but there is now a question mark over whether this will happen. The new French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, who is vehemently opposed to the inclusion of Turkey, is keen to demonstrate that he is not planning to make any type of u-turn in his Turkey policy; blocking of one or more chapters would be a clear indication of this -- even though he recently pledged to leave the Turkey issue on the back burner until after the constitutional crisis is tied up. Germany should do its utmost to persuade the French not to undertake any acts that would further damage EU-Turkey relations at a juncture when Turkey is heading into crucial parliamentary elections. Overall one could say the Germans have not gone out of their way to make substantial progress with Turkey but rather they have done a little over the bare minimum. A very common act in the EU -- lots of words and hot air but limited action. No doubt Merkel believes she is doing enough to keep her coalition partners and Turks at home happy while at the same time her continued rhetoric of open-ended talks and privileged partnership will keep those opposed to Turkey content.

There can be no doubt that Germany will continue to have a pivotal role in the future direction of Turkey-EU relations. Many people are expecting Berlin to keep Sarkozy in check and not allow him to bring the process with Ankara to a dangerous end. Sarkozy will likely insist on a debate on "Europe's borders" in the very near future, which will have implications for Turkey. The EU will be making a serious mistake if it tries to draw up definitive borders. Merkel will have a difficult choice to make. Will she keep on supporting the continuation of talks, given that the EU wants to see a stable and prosperous Turkey reformed and transformed into a country that shares our values? Without the EU anchor and the glint of membership it will be a struggle for any government in Ankara to achieve this. Or will Merkel eventually find solace with Sarkozy -- rebuilding the French-German axis and pushing for an alternative to Turkey? There is a lot at risk for the EU, Turkey and Germany.



BARAK ÖZDİBİR

THE TURKISH ECONOMY: REVIVAL OF A BIG POTENTIAL

İBRAHİM ÖZTÜRK



Despite double elections and a relatively deteriorated international environment, Turkey's economic recovery in the post-2001 crisis era continues (See Table-1). In nominal terms, both the GDP and the per capita GDP has more than doubled within five years as a result of fast and sustained growth, above 7 percent per annum.

Despite this growth, the CPI shrank to one-seventh of its former size, mainly because of an increased production index triggered by the surge in productivity. Recent growth and reduction in inflation have also caused a drastic decline in public deficit, from -16.5 percent in 2001 to just -0.7 percent by the end of 2006. In other words, the main axis of growth has been shifted for the first time in Turkey's history to the private sector from

Basic Macroeconomic Indicators	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
GNP (trillion \$)	145	180.8	239.2	299.4	360.8	399.6
Per Capita GDP (\$)	2,123	2,598	3,383	4,172	5,008	5,477
GDP Growth Rate (%)	-7.5	7.9	5.8	9.0	7.4	6.1
Budget Deficit/ GDP (%)	-16.5	-14.6	-11.3	-7.1	-2	-0.7
Net Public Sector Debt/GDP(%)	97	78.5	70.4	63.5	56	44.9
CPI (year end) (%)	68.5	29.7	18.4	9.3	7.7	9.6
Nominal Interest Rate on Domestic Borrowing (average, compounded) (%)	96.2	63.8	45.0	25.7	16.9	18.2
Interest Expenditures/ GDP (%)	23.3	18.9	16.4	13.2	9.4	8.5
Unemployment Rate (%)	10.0	10.3	10.5	10.3	10.3	9.9
Current Account Deficit (billion \$)	3,393	-1,521	-8,036	-15,601	-22,603	-31,654
Export (trillion \$)	34,373	40,124	51,206	67,047	76,949	91,912
Import (trillion \$)	38,103	47,407	65,216	90,925	110,479	132,988
FDI inflows (net)(billion \$)	2,855	962	1,253	2,024	8,725	19,186

the public. This process has helped public debt to decline below 60 percent of the GDP, just below the level set by the Maastricht criteria.

Parallel to the decline in inflation rates and improved fiscal balances, the cost of borrowing (interest rates on government bonds) declined radically. As more resources are left, the increase in govern-

ment investment toward infrastructure, education, health care, energy and transportation has been quite satisfactory. Exports have been one of the strongest engines of growth in this period. Due to structural bottlenecks of Turkey in terms of import dependency in the process of rapid growth, the recent economic growth created huge a current ac-

counts deficit. By the end of 2006, CAD had reached almost 8 percent of GDP, a record level among emerging market economies, with Hungary being the champion. This side effect of rapid growth, however, is expected to stabilize at a certain level as high-quality manufacturing investment continues. In fact, since May 2006, which marks a deteriorated international environment and inflation fatalities in Turkey, both trade and the current accounts deficit started stabilizing. As of April 2007, relative improvement in the balance of payment deficit has continued.

In terms of financing the ever-rising CAD, at the beginning long term credits has replaced short term portfolio investment, then, in the later stages, the FDI has constituted more than 80 percent of the realized CAD in 2007, as of April.

Expectations toward the Turkish economy has been significant among big investors. Therefore, economic players are getting past the negative experiences of an underachieving economy in the past and started pricing the rising potential of Turkey's future.

KADİR DİKBAS
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THE GERMANS ARE COMING

Germany is Turkey's most important trading partner. In terms of exports, they are first; in imports, second. One-tenth of all our foreign trade is conducted with Germany. According to 2006 figures, exports to Germany were \$9.68 billion, representing 11.3 percent of total exports. We imported \$14.6 billion from Germany, 10.6 percent of total imports.

In general, the trade gap between Turkey and Germany is not in Turkey's favor. Our imports to Germany stand at 66.4 percent of Germany's exports from Turkey. But this percentage surpasses our overall export-import ratio, which is 62.2 percent.

In terms of investment, Germany is the third-largest investor in Turkey. Official figures show that total foreign direct investment from April 2006 to April 2007 by German companies was \$7.06 billion, 10 percent of the total foreign direct investment in Turkey. At the same time, even if the rate of direct investments of Turkish companies in Germany isn't nearly as high, it has recently begun to increase, currently at \$903 million. In 2006, this figure was \$512 million.

Meanwhile, the amount of money being invested by enterprises established by Turks living in Germany is reaching high levels. Turkish immigrants in Germany, who run more than 68,000 small and large businesses, are also providing work for an estimated 335,000 people, including more than 100,000 Germans. The annual turnover from these businesses is around 32 billion euros. Another dimension to this all is in the tourism industry: Germany sends the highest number of visitors to Turkey of any single country. Of the 19.8 million foreign tourists visiting Turkey last year, almost 4 million were Germans. Not only this, but in recent years thousands of Germans have started to make Turkey their permanent home.

In short, Turkey and Germany enjoy a powerful and close level of cooperation not often found between two countries. There can be little doubt that one of the reasons their economic, political and cultural relations are so strong has to do with the presence of 3 million Turks living in Germany.

Even if political tension features prominently from time to time on the agenda between Germany and Turkey, there has been increased activity in economic relations between the two countries. Within this scope, Istanbul will host the Turkish German Economic Congress June 22-24. This congress, which will look at everything from automobiles and banking to textiles and retail, will take place under the auspices of the Turkish-German Trade and Industry Chambers (TD-IHK), the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodities Exchanges (TOBB) and the German Association of Trade Chambers.

Nearly 70 local and international speakers will take part in the meeting, and it is expected there will be representation by 200 German companies of varying sizes. This meeting will be an important opportunity for Turkish exporters trying to make stronger inroads into German markets. There will likely be discussion over the unchanging agenda items of many and free travel within the EU.

TD-IHK President and Manager of Human Relations for the Metro Group Dr. Rainhardt Freiherr von Leoprechting says politics should be left to the politicians and that despite a heavy and crowded politically based agenda German belief and confidence in the future of Turkey has not diminished at all. Also in Istanbul at the start of last week was the Investment Consulting Council, a meeting of directors of international firms, government authorities and the Turkish business world. And in the coming week, a large delegation of Germans is arriving in Turkey for the congress. Once the congress concludes, Istanbul is also to host the World Chambers Congress. This TOBB-hosted gathering will include 1,000 businessmen from 90 countries. Like other meetings of its kind, this congress will be a valuable opportunity for businessmen from around the world to hold talks and forge ties with others.

Foreign trade with Germany (in million of dollars)		
	Exports	Imports
1997	5,253	8,021
1998	5,460	7,316
1999	5,475	5,880
2000	5,180	7,198
2001	5,367	5,335
2002	5,869	7,042
2003	7,485	9,453
2004	8,745	12,516
2005	9,455	13,634
2006	9,681	14,584
2006*	3,016	4,512
2007*	3,616	4,741

* January-April Source: Foreign Trade Undersecretariat

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Mercedes' star inspiration for Bilal

He set out from Pınarbaşı in Kayseri for Bilal Stuttgart -- the German city famous because of Mercedes. He was 26 years old and had been married for five years. Going abroad was a powerful way to combat poverty for Bilal. His first attempt at a factory job was before his daughter Süheyla reached her first birthday. Bilal's initial adventure was at the Seydişehir aluminum factory, but he decided he couldn't stay there. Then one day, he thought about Germany. One of his cousins had already been. "For two years, just for two years" is what Hayrettin had said four years ago. When Hayrettin came for holiday in August, Bilal suddenly became a potential "Almanca" (a Turkish worker in Germany). One month later, he found himself waving to his father Hac Kazim, his daughter Süheyla and his dear friend Muhsin at the Sirkeci railway station as he set out on the road to Germany. It was September 1968.

His four-day-long train journey brought back the same feelings of surprise and excitement that he experienced on his first trip to the cinema. Finally, he reached the Munich railway station known as Bahnhof. His excitement continued through the classification of employees at the station, and Bilal then found himself on the train to Stuttgart. He was amazed he didn't feel tired in spite of the fact he wasn't sleeping at all. After passing through Augsburg, Ulm and many other cities with names he couldn't read, Bilal reached Stuttgart. Let us hear the rest from Bilal:

"When we reached the station, there was a big, three-winged spinning star at the top of the high tower that attracted my attention -- this star gave me a strange courage. My cousin from Karlsruhe came to welcome me and took me to his home. For a few days we talked a lot and reminisced until I finally announced, 'Let us find me a job.' He told me it was easy to find a job as there was plenty of work and no workers. We went to the KE Paint Company, the company where my cousin was working, and I was hired. I, who was feeding the animals in my yard just 10 days earlier, was now among the big machines that smelled of burned nylon. I became emotional as I bit into bread with cheese from my hometown during the lunch break. I thought: 'Bilal, what have you done? What have you done?' In the evening, I prepared my suitcase and told my cousin I was going back. Hayrettin begged me to stay and not embarrass him in front of his employer. He told me if I worked more and had a little patience, I would get used to it. He convinced me to stay by saying he would take a one-week holiday

for me so I could travel a little. The next morning he went to work and I went to the city.

In those times, there were no other places for us to go than Bahnhof, so that is where I headed. There were some other Turkish workers like me, and they were all sitting with cups of coffee and cigarettes in hand, so I took a big cup of coffee as well. I didn't like it very much but it was the custom here. Actually, when I used my first holiday to come back home, I told my wife to make a large pot of the tea I missed so much. While I was sipping my coffee, my eyes went to the big star at the top of the tower. I had heard that the star was actually the Mercedes star which visited the dreams of so many. People kept on explaining that Mercedes was a 'company as big as the state' with lots of money. There was among us a man working for



PHOTO © AP

Mercedes, and the next day we all went to the top of the building where an even bigger star was spinning. We went to the gate of the large courtyard of a factory as big as a town or small city and I realized they didn't compare it to the state for nothing. In spite of their pickiness when hiring workers, I was hired. When I told my cousin in the evening, he said, 'You hit the jackpot, Bilal.' So I started to work at a job cleaning the remains of small rubber and plastics.

I spent nine years with this company as big as the state itself, but then I began to feel the same way I had at the paint company. 'What would matter if I stayed at my hometown, there where no one is dying of this pain?' I asked myself. But this time, I was the one who repeated my cousin's words: 'Patience, you'll get used to it.' Then I said to myself, 'If man has placed this star on the top of the city, there must be a way.' Back home

I used to trade with animals a bit. If only I could learn this language. If only I could place a star on top of my life. One day while working, I stood watching the belt rolling in front of me. There were 30 people on both sides picking through the rubber parts, cleaning out the remains and then putting the parts back on the belt -- we call it 'picking up the gum.' I started to calculate in my head -- 30 times DM 3,000 would make DM 90,000. While watching the work being done, I realized my cousin and I could finish just as much in half of a day. In fact, a tenth of the staff would be enough. While standing there, my supervisor came by and asked why I looked so lost in my thoughts. 'I am thinking,' I said. He told me: 'If you have any ideas about your job, write them down and put them in the box downstairs. It will be reviewed and if it helps production you'll get your award.'

This was my turning point. I couldn't write a letter with my few words of German, so I went to a man from Denizli offering translation services to Turkish workers in the factory. I made him write down everything I was thinking when standing next to the belt. We put the letter into the box and the administration called me one month later. I went there with the translator and discovered that they liked my idea. They asked me whether I would be able to complete the job if I establish a company. While hearing the translator's words -- 'Look brother, you will not be able to do it. You'll fail -- my eyes were pinned to the big star I could see through the window. 'Why not?' I asked myself, saying 'yes' to something I wasn't even sure that I understood entirely. The translator helped me acquire a business permit and the company later gave me 10 baskets of plastic and rubber parts, along with the blades. My cousin didn't help because he didn't think my idea would work, but my cousin's wife assisted me and I owe her thanks.

They [the company] were pleased with what I had accomplished, so they increased the number of baskets and we rented a small location. As soon as we entered the market, similar jobs started to arrive from other companies and we started to hire some friends. While reluctant in the beginning, they later became my support and I owe them thanks as well. My courage remained, the number of customers increased and in our sixth year we have moved to a serious workshop. Meanwhile, I brought my children to the country. Now, along with the part-time workers, I have 40 employees and we do the finishing process for all finished plastic and rubber parts. We have a small production as well. Now whenever I see Mercedes star, I think of the moment I saw it for the first time. Still, this business hasn't helped my nostalgia, even after all these years." **Frankfurt Today's Zaman**



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan hold silver plates they were offered by the president of the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce May 26, 2006 in Berlin.

Congress to bring Turkish, German businessmen closer together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The congress will gather together more than 70 specialists and also address such topics as "Economic Relations between Turkey and Germany," "Turkey as an Investment Country," "Germany as an Investment Country" and "The Textile Economy." On the second day, workshops dealing with mutual economic, legal and tax issues will be held. After that, the mayors of the sister cities -- Cologne's Fritz Schramma and Istanbul's Kadir Topbas -- will analyze the topic of "Urbanization and Planning of a City."

During the three-day congress, managers and representatives from business and politics will have a chance to develop contacts in investment, export, import and cooperation.

The important issues on the agendas of Turkey and Germany will be discussed by such prominent personalities as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Industry and Commerce Minister Ali Coşkun, Economy Minister Ali Babacan, former Turkish President Süleyman Demirel, Istanbul Mayor Topbas, German Ambassador to Turkey Eckart Cuntz, TD-IHK President von Leoprechting, Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodities Exchanges (TOBB) President Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu, Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO) President Tanil Küçük, Turkish

Association of Travel Agents (TÜRSAB) President Başaran Ulusoy, Istanbul Union of Ready-to-wear and Clothing Exporters (İHKİB) President Süleyman Orakçıoğlu, Turkish Exporters' Assembly (TİM) President Oğuz Satıcı, TD-IHK Istanbul President Teomna Yelkenoğlu, Women Entrepreneurs Association (KAGİDER) President Meltem Kurtisan, Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (TÜSİAD) EU representative Bahadır Kaleağası, Mercedes CEO Jürgen Ziegler, Bosch Turkey General Manager Gürkan Karakas, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles Chairman Stephan Schaller, Oğer Tours founder Vural Oğer, Festo General Manager Otto Bauer and Turkish Airlines (THY) General Manager Temel Kotil.

On the first day of the congress Deutsche Post Chairman Werner Scheller will present an award to Galatasaray Football Club Chairman Özhan Canayın and Vice President Adnan Polat as the most beloved Turkish team in Germany. During the award ceremony a protocol between İHK Cologne and the Small and Medium Industry Development Organization (KOSGEB) will be signed. As part of the Turkish-German Economy Congress, participating firms and visitors will have the chance to find business opportunities on "Sourcing Day." **Istanbul Today's Zaman**



Wall building is 10 times easier with Duvarpan

Antalya-based Turkish firm Duvarpan, although a relative newcomer to the construction materials market, has already taken the domestic construction sector by storm, with its pre-formed, easy-installation wall units seen as a timely technological advancement. Owner of Duvarpan Atilla Kaşlı describes his success as having "brought a new brand to our country." Indeed Duvarpan has not only brought a new brand to the Turkish market, it has also reduced dependence within Turkey on similar brands from abroad, thereby filling an important gap in the market.

Kaşlı says "our product is an industrial one," noting: "Any comparison with products already on the market wouldn't be right. While wall builders are currently able to build a one square meter wall in five different stages these days, Duvarpan walls can be built in one stage." Regarding the technical specifications of his walls, he notes: "The contents used in construction bring about an heightened heat insulation. While the normal polystyrene used on the market is five centimeters for heating insulation, we use 10 centimeters as our thinnest polystyrene. The result is that we

achieve a high level of heat insulation." And of course the product is light, making it easy to transport and manipulate, he adds.

Kaşlı, who states that he has paid no licensing fees for the Duvarpan name outside of Turkey, says the brand belongs entirely to him and that his company has been "patiently distributing the new product" on the Turkish market for the past two-and-a-half years. Meanwhile serious demands for Duvarpan have begun to come in from abroad. Kaşlı notes that the Turkish republic of Northern Cyprus (KKTC) and Ukraine have both put in requests for Duvarpan, and that the real goal for the firm at this point is to enter the Iranian market.

"We are a true research and development firm," asserts Kaşlı, who also notes that the brand has grown from one product to five different products over the past two years. He also explains something about the Duvarpan name: "Because we wanted our brand to be used abroad and in Turkey, we did not choose a foreign name. Today in Greece, Iran, Iraq, Ukraine and throughout the Middle East, people call our brand 'Duvarpan.'" **Istanbul Today's Zaman**

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A CRY ECHOING THROUGH THE CENTURIES

HASANKEYF



PAT YALE HASANKEYF

A few years ago Hasankeyf was the cause célèbre for environmentalists who were horrified at the idea that the planned Ilisu Dam would flood the ruins of this ancient settlement on the Tigris (Dicle) river. Such was the international outcry that the British government was forced to back-track on plans to support the dam. By pulling the financial plug they left the project temporarily high and dry. Unfortunately, that was not the end of the story, and Hasankeyf still lives in a state of limbo, unsure whether it has a future to look forward to or not. The result of all the publicity has been to bring Turks, especially from the East, rushing to

How to get there: Regular dolmuses from Batman to Midyat pass through Hasankeyf. You can also organize a taxi excursion from Mardin - it takes two hours in each direction. **Where to stay:** There is one very simple hotel in Hasankeyf, although some visitors have put up at the Öğretmen Evi (Teachers' House) without being teachers. There are plenty of business-class hotels in Batman, or you can stay in much more attractive Midyat.

visit Hasankeyf. However for the time being foreign visitors are still relatively rare, not least because the cloud hanging over the town has removed any incentive to build a good hotel there. Of all the sites in southeastern Turkey, Hasankeyf's is arguably the most spectacular. As you approach across the flat plain from Batman, a dramatic sweep of curved rock suddenly juts up above the cool blue waters of the Tigris, while the abandoned struts of the old Artukid bridge hint at the treasures to come. The approach from Midyat is less dramatic since it sneaks you in at the rear where the souvenir stalls are a tad

off-putting. However, you have only to walk past them to find yourself in an echoing gorge riddled with old cave homes. To the right the ruins of the old town straggling up the cliff-face offer an invitation, difficult to ignore, to commence climbing.

Just as in Cappadocia, some of the cave dwellings at Hasankeyf date back to the centuries before written records. However, the expanding settlement didn't really come into its own until the 12th and 13th centuries when it was governed by the Artuklus, an offshoot of the Selcuks who also held sway in Mardin. Eventually their place was taken by the Ayyubids who were, in turn, replaced by the prettily-named Akkoyunlu (White Sheep) dynasty. It was their king Uzun Hasan (Hasan the Tall) who built the imposing palace on the summit of the rock, but tempting as it is to imagine that he also bestowed his name on the settlement, Hasankeyf actually appears to be a corruption of the Arabic Hisn al-Kifa, meaning "fortress of the rock." In 1260 the Mongols roared into town and undermined the White Sheep rulers, who nevertheless managed to cling onto power until 1416, by which time the Ottomans also had Hasankeyf in their sights. However, once they had eliminated the threat to their borders from Safavid Iran, the Ottomans lost interest again and left the town to fall into the slumber from which it was eventually awoken by the dam furor.

A cobbled path zigzags up to the top of the gorge, passing through a graceful monumental gateway dating back to the 14th century. Eventually you arrive at the remains of the Small Palace built by Uzun Hasan, currently inaccessible. The path continues to wind ever upwards until it deposits you near the ruins of the Big Palace and the Ulu Cami. The mosque dates back to the 12th century and had survived with its dome intact into the 21st century when misguided protestors against the dam clam-

bered on top of it and caused it to fall in. Up near the mosque stand the remains of stone-fronted cave houses very like those in Cappadocia. These continued in occupation into the 1970s, when the residents opted to be rehoused back at ground level.

The main attractions at Hasankeyf are grouped together around the gorge, but it's worth finding time to inspect a few outlying sites as well. These include a cute, hump-back-domed tomb covered in green and blue tiles that housed the remains of Uzun Hasan's son Zeynel Bey and dates back to c. 1480. Also worth a look is the graceful stone minaret of the Er Rik mosque, which rises up near the bridge in the heart of the modern village. With teardrop-shaped panels of calligraphy dripping down its façade, it looks very like the minarets in Mardin. The mosque itself is less interesting, the original having long ago slipped into the river.

Although there are plenty of specific sites to explore at Hasankeyf, the real joy of a visit lies in the chance to explore its spectacular location. It's hard to know which is the more beautiful -- the stunning, unspoiled rural view from the summit of the gorge looking inland, or the beautiful vista down over the river with the curving rock throwing a protective arm around it. In high summer the latter view is best appreciated from simple çardak (shelter) restaurants set up right in the river so that you can tuck into your fish lunch with cooling water lapping around your feet.

It is almost impossible to believe that a place as beautiful as this could actually vanish, but the loss of the Roman site at Belkis-Zeugma to the Birecik Dam suggests that it is still a real possibility. The government is apparently prepared to pay for some of the monuments to be moved elsewhere, but such would be the cost that it is hard to believe a replacement site could ever be a patch on the original. The message of this piece then? Go now!

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More than just tire production, a true success story

The economic crisis that affected Turkey in 2001 knocked on the door as Europeans, or as they say EU members, adopted the euro as their currency. During the last six-year period Turkish communities all over Europe also had their share of economic turbulence. The agendas of Turkish entrepreneurs and employees during this time were full of negative news and fears. Has this period, resembling a dark tunnel for the Turks living in Europe, finally ended?

AHMET ÖZAY MANNHEIM

Keskin Tuning was born in the town of Frankentahl near Mannheim. Surrounded by vineyards, Frankentahl is a town that combines industry with agriculture. As you drive past Frankentahl and steer toward Kaiserslautern by way of Grünstadt, you start climbing a mountain range that extends all the way to France. These are the mountains that stopped Attila the Hun from advancing further into Europe. That's why there are many castles in the region, one of which, for instance, is called Türkenfeld. From such a historical platform three brands have emerged over the past four years: Syron, Keskin and Mam. These brands adorn BMWs, Mercedes and Audis from Italy to Russia and from Turkey to Holland and two brothers are behind all three.

Ulvi Keskin, the older brother, recalls how, when they were still at school, they couldn't help but notice the steel tire rims used for Audis, BMWs and Mercedes, which he describes as "frankly quite ugly" -- it bothered them. Their father came to Germany years ago and started working for Mercedes as an immigrant worker, but the Keskin brothers couldn't bring themselves to like the inelegant tire rims that were considered fitting for those world-class automobiles. Ironically enough, just as Turks were sometimes considered ill-fitting in German society, the Keskin brothers had a problem with the unsightly steel rims on German cars -- however ultimately this particular German-Turkish fusion was to produce something really quite beautiful.

When their German passports were stolen in 1989 during a summer holiday in Turkey, they couldn't immediately return to Germany and were expelled from school. Therefore they were forced to become businessmen to support themselves. Buying and selling cars helped them to learn the importance of good-looking rims. They soon realized that cars with more elegant rims were more easily sold. "We were using the basement of our home as a depot," says Ulvi Keskin, remembering how his father used to get mad at them as he wanted his sons to continue their education.

When did you open your first store?

It was 1989. Because our passports were stolen we couldn't return to Germany on time and thus were unable to begin school. I was 20 and my brother was 18. We started helping our uncle [when we returned]. He had a grocery store and the business was not good. We displayed our



Established by Ulvi Keskin and Abdurrahman Keskin in 1989 in an abandoned mill in Mannheim. The two brothers, born in Bayburt's village of Mam, came to Germany in 1978 with their family. Their father started working at Mercedes. Now they own 11 companies

Keskin Tuning

operating in the production of various items from rims and tires to tiles. In their stores and factories located in Heidelberg, Kaiserslautern, Mannheim and Frankentahl they employ around 500 people. They have three brands: Syron Tyres, Keskin Tuning and Mam.

tire rims in his shop window and saw that they were selling well. There was an old mill across from his shop. It was a nearly ruined, dilapidated place. We cleaned up the whole place with my brother, and rented it at the ridiculous price of 600 deutschemark. We started using that building as a warehouse for tires and tire rims. We somehow managed to sell our tires and rims cheaper than the market rates. We became a brand and the German firm from which we used to purchase the rims couldn't compete with us and closed down. The time of aluminum rims hadn't yet come. They were made of iron or steel. And in the meantime we opened a second store; one of them was in Frankentahl and the other was in Mannheim. Then we increased the stores first to four, and then to eight.

How did you first decide to create your own brand?

As we made a great headway in such a short time by 1996 we had reached a stage where we started considering having a brand of our own. In fact we had become the biggest customer of a German firm, which was the largest aluminum rim producing company in the country at the time. We thought that they did not know the market as well as we did. We realized that they were not interested in the demands and needs of the customers.

What was your second step after making that decision?

We had a German engineer draw the rim we designed. Then we made a wooden model of that rim. And then the metal models were produced. The tire rim model we had developed had to be sent to the German Motor Vehicles Institute (KBA) in Flensburg as a sample. All

of this took two years. But as soon as we began production we started receiving orders from Austria, Switzerland and France. So we had to establish a second company and started marketing our own brand. We named our first tire rim after our company's name "Keskin Tuning," only its abbreviated version; "KT 1."

Where do you manufacture your products?

We manufacture rims in Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey, and our tires in South Korea and Argentina. The reason we choose different countries is that different countries reach high standards in different fields of production. Now we manufacture summer tires in South Korea and winter tires in Argentina.

Does Argentina's success in winter tire production stem from its closeness to Antarctica?

Bravissimo! That's right; they conduct the tests for winter tires at the South Pole. Also, Argentina is close to the raw material resources. That's why they name their tires "Antarctica."

How many tires do you produce a year?

In our first year it was around 25,000. Now we yearly produce around 150,000 tires. There is a German competitor by the name "Falken." They produce around 80,000 a year. They sell their brand at around 500 dealers.

Who do you sell the tires to?

Car services comprise most of our customers. And when it comes to country-based information, we sell the most tires to Austria, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Portugal. I was forgetting; we have a "call service" even in Bayburt, our hometown. Our rim sales are going well in Switzerland. We have a dealer in Moscow.

What is your advice for young people?

They should finish their schooling. Ironically we dropped out of school and were forced to begin to work and achieved success. The high school we had enrolled at was a good one, but the same positive things may not befall everyone. Thus they must graduate from high school at the very least.

OK, the last question; what does Syron mean?

"Ziron" is a ravioli-like dish served with yogurt, peculiar to Bayburt. We made it into a brand name as "Syron" after making very slight changes. And we got off the ground. It particularly caught on among youngsters. "Keskin" is our surname, and "Mam" is the name of the village where our father and we were born. This way we think we paid our debt to the country we were born in.

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TODAY'S ZAMAN
Your Way of Understanding Turkey

PROFESSOR ŞEN: TURKS IMPORTANT PLAYERS WITHIN EUROPEAN UNION

AHMET ÖZAY ESSEN

Faruk Şen is the founder and current director of the 20-year old Center for Turkish Studies, which is working to launch a Turkish-German University by 2008. We interviewed Şen on the Turks in Germany, the pursuit of an umbrella Muslim identity and the policies of the current administration vis-à-vis the Turks.

How did the idea to found the Center for Turkish Studies (TAM) emerge?

I got the idea to found a center for Turkish studies that would generate reliable knowledge on Turkey during my college years. I considered it to be a very small unit. We thought we could create it within the university body under the sponsorship of the Volkswagen Foundation. But Chairman of the German Science Council Professor Dr. Niemyer heard the idea and made a proposal by which he offered to make an annual contribution of DM 35,000 if we established it in Bonn. We accepted the offer and started the Center on Oct. 1, 1984.

What have you accomplished in the last two decades?

Above all, we identified the current situation with regard to the adaptation of Turks in Germany. One of our major accomplishments is our studies that will change the notion of Turkish workers in Germany. We proved that Turkish workers have turned into Turkish businessmen. We pioneered the transformation of Turkish employers into trainers who promote labor training in their workplaces. We took the pulse of Turks in Germany and kept track of developments in the world of immigrants through our representative surveys; in 1994, the center demonstrated the aging trend of immigrants in a survey conducted among seven nations. The research was followed by the launch of senior houses for Turks. Germany's policies vis-à-vis senior immigrants took shape with the influence of our research. In addition to our work on immigration issues, we were also engaged in work in parallel with Turkey's relations with the EU.

How did Turkey's EU bid affect your activities?

We compared Turkey's accession to the EU with the accessions of Spain, Greece and Portugal in 1987. Then we analyzed the contribution of membership to the EU budget. Currently we are doing research on Turkey's EU membership in terms of the European defense and security identity. Turkey and its eastern neighbors in particular, including the Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Iran and Iraq, are the vital elements of our research. In addition to that, I chaired the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for four years. I am a founding member of the foundation. Another pride I should note is that we are a UN-accredited nongovernmental organization. Only eight organizations enjoy the same status in Germany and one -- the Marmara Foundation -- in Turkey.

What will your future work include?

We are currently working on three important projects. We will commence construction on the Turkish-German University on land donated by İshak Alaton in October. We also managed to include Münster University in the project. Münster University has been named among the top 100 of the best 500 universities in the world. Our projected university will admit 200 students in three departments. Also, as Istanbul will be Europe's culture capital along with Essen, we have some plans with regard to this. 2011 is the 50th anniversary of the migration of Turkish workers to Germany. In consideration of this historic event, we are preparing to found an immigration museum in Essen Zeche Verein. The North Rhein-Westphalia Construction Ministry is providing with the necessary funds to implement this project. The third thing we have in mind to do is this: Turks are the most frequent migrants after the Chinese and Indians, but they do not have a museum. So we are planning to found a museum in Istanbul. There is a museum dedicated to exhibits on migration from Germany to the US; we thought why should we not do the same for the Turkish migration. So we are founding it; we will open it in Beykoz by 2010.

How would you comment on the last 20 years of the Turks in Germany?

Some 2,700,000 Turks currently live in Germany. Up until 1981, 89 percent of the Turkish presence in Germany was male and 11 percent was female. Laborers made up 91 percent of the total. In 2006, 49 percent was female and only 33 percent were laborers. The majority of the Turkish population is young. The Turkish population over 18 constitutes 55 percent of the total Turkish population. There are now Turks at all levels in Germany. There are high-class Turks as well as the lower-class ones. In Germany, 70,000 Turkish entrepreneurs control 40 billion euros. However, 37 percent of the 29 age group is unemployed, and 45 percent live near the poverty line. There are 870,000 Turks who are eligible for work in Germany; 270,000 are unemployed. In other words, while 10 percent of Germans are unemployed, this increases to 30 percent among the Turks.

Turks are the most frequent migrants after the Chinese and Indians, but they do not have a museum. So we are planning to found a museum in Istanbul. There is a museum dedicated to exhibits on migration from Germany to the US; we thought why should we not do the same for the Turkish migration. So we are founding it; we will open it in Beykoz by 2010



Professor Dr. Faruk Şen

Born in Ankara in 1948, Faruk Şen is the son of a family of teachers from Istanbul. He completed his primary education at Istanbul Kanlıca Primary School and went to a German high school. Şen started his college education at Münster University in Germany on Oct. 2, 1971 where he completed his business administration. He studied his doctorate at the same university on companies started by Turkish laborers. Following his academic studies, he worked at Bamberg University and directed a project on the passage from school to profession in Duisburg in 1983 when he also developed the idea to create a center for Turkish studies. Professor Şen made the idea a reality in 1985 and founded the Center for Turkish Studies (TAM) in Bonn. He currently acts as director of the center, affiliated with Essen University, and is working on the establishment of the Turkish-German University, the launch of which is projected for 2008.

What does Schaeuble want?

I think he was affected by the Greek policy in West Thrace with regard to umbrella identity. As you may know, the umbrella identity in West Thrace is Islam and the minority status comes after this identity. The German administration seeks to replace Turkish identity with Islam. But it is very difficult given that Turkey is only two-and-a-half hours away from Germany.

There are many Turks outside the country who govern German corporations. What would you say about that?

Let me give an example. Nokia West Europe Director Ümit Türküna has a daughter who lives in Turkey; she is around 50. There are other examples at Pfizer, Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank. However, the different picture inside Germany is relevant to the conservative structure of the country. Unfortunately, Germany does not have such a personnel policy domestically. Germany is a nation-state with no multi-

cultural government model. The only nation the Germans got the chance to know is Poland, whose citizens came to their country before World War I. Because they did not have a thorough colonization policy, the Germans are not flexible in personnel hiring like the British or the French. It is difficult in Germany. Let us not expect any increase in the number of Turks in Germany until 2017. Our population is aging, too. There is no new population coming. Our people do not have a lot of children. Quality people seek their future outside the country. The number of employers and students will increase. Some are coming back to Turkey. Our population in Germany will not be more than 3 million in 2017; 25 percent of the Turks will still be unemployed. One-third of the Turks will be living under the poverty line. There will be no improvement in these figures. There is still racism in Germany in the hiring process.

What is the overall situation of the Turkish entrepreneurship in Germany and the EU?

The Turkish population in Germany developed a dynamic by which they founded their own business establishments during the 1990s. This approach, which does not see independent work as an alternative to dependent work, emerged from the different living and working styles and the high value attached to independent work. Today Turkish entrepreneurs function as the largest ethnic entrepreneur group and the dynamic of the German ethnic economy. Today, the number of Turkish entrepreneurs active in Germany is 68,300, controlling an annual turnover amounting to 31.6 billion euros. The majority of the establishments with annual turnovers of 462,000 euros are family businesses. However, they also are generating ever-growing businesses. In 2006, the Turkish entrepreneurs in Germany made an investment of 112,500 euros per establishment and 7.7 billion euros in total. They provide employment for 335,000 people. In the last two decades, Turkish businesses made visible progress not only in their numeric increase but also in quality. Small convenience stores turned into big fancy restaurants, small ticket-selling businesses into respected travel agencies.

Turks in the EU have become an important factor in the economies of the countries in which they are living. The number of Turks who make a living in EU countries has increased to 101,000. The majority of Turkish entrepreneurs in the EU (68 percent) live in Germany followed by France and Holland. The investments of Turkish businesses have increased from 5.6 billion euros to 10.9 billion euros in the last decade and the total turnover from 21.8 billion euros to 43.9 billion euros. The same increase is visible in employment. The number of employed has increased from 232,000 in 1996 to 474,000 in 2006. Given that Turkish entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon for Europe and Germany, further growth should be expected in the middle and long run. The existing number will be added to by the 23,500 Turkish entrepreneurs who live in Bulgaria and Romania, which have recently become part of the EU. That way, the number of Turkish entrepreneurs within the EU will increase to 124,500.

Could you give some details about the TAM project to found a university that will offer education in German in Turkey?

There is no university offering education in German in Turkey. Despite many imprints left by the German scholastic establishment on Turkey, the lack of such an institution in Turkey is an important shortcoming. The university we will found will further bilateral relations between the two countries and integrate the scientific accomplishments of both sides. We are planning to launch the Turkish-German University in fall of 2008. The university will have three faculties offering majors in economics, communications and political science at the undergraduate level. The projected institution will also have a master's program on international law and a technical education faculty. Classes will be taught in German in the university, which will admit 600 students at the beginning. The university will be founded on the area donated by Alarko Holding in Riva-Istanbul. We are working together with Münster University in terms of the university's scientific matters. The project is also supported by the Northern Rhein-Westphalia Regional Administration.

In your opinion, how will the Turks in Germany move on?

I think they should consider that life in Europe has changed remarkably. Germany and some other once-popular countries are on the decline. The situation is a little bit different in Ireland, Spain and Portugal. For this reason, my advice to young people under 30 is to pursue their future in the Far East, maybe Thailand or Vietnam. They offer a future. They should learn management and technology.

What about Turkey?

Turkey still appears to be negligent toward developing projects that its own people may foster. Four years ago, they appointed a minister responsible for Turks abroad; however, the ministry failed to convene the Higher Council for Foreign Citizens and develop a policy vis-à-vis Turks living in Germany. Hopefully things will get better in the future.

HAMIT ALTINTOP

PHOTO: BELMAN ISTUKLEK



Hamit Altintop -- a relative newcomer among German-born and raised Turkish players -- has signed with a club of every young boy's dreams: Bayern Munich. The wise defender says he didn't make the move because of its name, but rather the club's ability to utilize him fully as a player. The 24-year-old older brother of twin Halil says that fame, although nice, is not nearly as important as good behavior -- a quality he acquired from his tight-knit family

A good heart more important than fame, says defender Hamit

BEHRAM KILIÇ ISTANBUL

Hamit Altintop -- who was destined to play soccer with a surname that translates as "Golden Ball" -- is a Turkish international defender from Germany who will be wearing the Bayern Munich jersey next year. The 24-year-old defender spoke on his professional career, family and humility to *Today's Zaman*.

The young Gelsenkirchen-born player says that Bayern Munich had been calling him on to the squad for quite some time. "I've been in touch with Bayern Munich for quite a while now -- they've been communicating with me this whole time -- they kept telling me they were following me closely, to keep my good performance up and that when the time was right they'd call me," he says. Hamit notes that this is a very well thought out transfer and that he's not making the move because of the club's name alone. "I'm going there because I have goals as a professional player and they are very aware of my style, and consequently I know how they can utilize my skills on the pitch."

The 24-year-old spoke about how sad his mother was when he went official about leaving former team Schalke 04 -- whose jersey he wore with his twin brother Halil, who is his junior by 10 minutes. Speaking on his family's sentiments on his transfer, Hamit says: "We are really attached to our mother. I know that everyone boasts the same thing, but with us it's a little different because she was a single mother, and we had this incredible home environment. So when I look at it from that perspective, I know this move is going to be tough for us. I'll chalk it up to experience, I guess. And Halil saw the situation at Schalke; when I got the offer from Bayern he said, 'The best thing for you to do is transfer.' He fully supported me."

A year in retrospect

The young defender did a short analysis of the past year, recalling that Bayern Munich didn't fare well in the 2006-07 season. "Yeah, they finished fourth. But there are a bunch of new transfers coming in for the upcoming season. Names like Lahm, Podolski, Schweinsteiger, who are all young and powerful, are coming in and will be unting their skills with seasoned players like Oliver Kahn and Roy Makaay. If they can do this successfully, they'll be a formidable force," he says.

Regarding his frustrations over the past four years with Schalke he says: "There were times when I wondered why I wasn't playing. I'm not saying that I should always be on the pitch, but if you are a player of a certain caliber and your performance has been up to par and you're not playing, you get a little restless. I went through stages like that at Schalke. They wanted to extend my contract about eight to nine months ago. I asked for time in making my decision since I was getting other offers. In the interim I decided on Bayern Munich."

Hamit wasn't too impressed with his new club's performance this past year, either. "We made a lot of mistakes -- players, our coach and administration alike. We simply failed. Especially during this past season when Munich had fallen behind; we should've been the champions. Second place isn't bad, but we should've been number one -- our fans still cheered us on, though," Hamit says, upon reflection.

When reminded that a lot of players of Turkish origin are making a name for themselves in German soccer and asked for his opinion on the debate about some Turkish players being called up for the German squad, he says: "I really think such claims are exaggerated. We have to be a little more realistic in looking

at this. Kids that grew up in Germany and happen to be Turkish and gifted in soccer at the same time might get called to the German national team. Take Mesut [Özil] from our team, for example; he's on the German junior squad and his prospects with the national team look very bright. Then there is Serdar Taşcı from Stuttgart; he preferred Germany but I really don't think anyone has the right to criticize their choices. Nobody knows how they were raised or anything about them."

Family and values

The 24-year-old, who lost his father at the age of two, spoke about how his mother raised the twins, along with their older sisters, while working for 25 years straight. "She taught us the importance of hard work and how to overcome obstacles," he says, adding that she came out to watch him during one game, but because she gets really nervous she prefers to see the match on television. Nonetheless, she always asks how they did when she can't watch the games on TV.

When asked about the differences between himself and his twin brother,

Hamit says that they are the same on the inside but externally they differ. "He dresses differently, his clothes and how he carries himself are all different. He's a little more reserved. It takes him a while to warm up to people. I like to hang out with people I just meet and joke around." And on their relationship on the pitch, he says that they didn't spend a lot of time on the national team together. Hamit says that the coach was unable to see how useful they could be together on the pitch as they can both detect each other's every move.

Neither of them like defeat and after each game they have a little session where they analyze their mistakes. "There can be some downsides to playing together, though," he adds.

The 24-year-old says that both victories and defeats are blown out of proportion by the fans, media, offi-

cial and players. "There is a fine line between victory and defeat," he says. In his opinion if a soccer player does his job on the pitch well, even if he happens to miss a penalty that bounces off the post, he'll still receive the love of the fans.

He says that Turks born and raised abroad differ from those in Turkey in that they view their goals from different perspectives. Those who play in Turkey first and move on to a foreign club later in life realize that they were stressing themselves out unnecessarily, according to Hamit.

The analytical player says he can't hold a grudge and that if Turks learn to be more altruistic, many doors will open up to them, not just those of the European Union.

Hamit says he prefers a peaceful life as opposed to a life of fame, noting that fame is a good thing at times, but there are also times when it's less than desirable. "What I want in life is not fame. I appear on TV and in newspapers because of what I do. I'd be lying if I said I don't care for a nice home or car -- but I think the kind of person you are in them is very important, as are the people who surround you in them. Cars, homes and fame are all finite things. A good heart is such an important virtue. What I'm trying to say is that not being well-known is not a deficiency, but not being respectful, caring, honest and sharing are deficiencies in my opinion. I try my best to better myself in every way, try new things, be more open minded and be helpful towards others -- these are essential qualities for a human in my opinion," he says.



PHOTO: CIHAN

Feldkamp returns for second spell at Galatasaray

Veteran German coach Karl-Heinz "Kalli" Feldkamp has been handed the reins of Istanbul giants Galatasaray Lions following the departure of Belgian coach Erik Gerets.

Feldkamp, 73, was confirmed as the club's new coach by Chairman Özhan Canaydin after a meeting with the board of directors earlier this month. Kalli led Galatasaray to the Turkish double during his first spell in charge in 1992-93 before making way for Rainer Holmann the following season. He briefly coached Besiktas in 1999-2000 but resigned due to poor health.

Long absence

Feldkamp, who signed a two-year contract, said: "I have never lost interest in Turkish or international soccer. I know most of the Turkish teams in detail. I have the enthusiasm, desire and ambition to inspire my players."

The trainer, who has not worked since leaving Besiktas, has named Ahmet Akcan as his assistant. A coach since 1968, Feldkamp occupied the helm at DSC Arminia Bielefeld, 1. FC Kaiserslautern, BV Borussia Dortmund, FC Bayer 05 Uerdingen and Eintracht Frankfurt as well as Egyptian side Ismaily SC. The Galatasaray Lions finished third in the Turkcell Super League this season under Gerets and will resume their quest for European success in the second qualifying round of the 2007-08 UEFA Cup. The club has also said it will be bringing Turkish players Bars Özbek and Serkan Çalik to Istanbul from Germany's SC Rot-Weiss Essen.

Some doubting Thomases in Turkey are trying to make a big deal about Feldkamp's age. Feldkamp, born on June 2, 1934 in Essen, Germany is no stranger to Turkey or Turkish soccer. A already mentioned he led Galatasaray to the 1991-92 championships, and later coached Besiktas. Feldkamp is also a writer for *Zaman* daily. *Istanbul Today's Zaman*



PHOTO: ARA

Ümit Özat signs off at Fenerbahçe

An interesting development occurred last month when former Fenerbahçe captain Ümit Özat decided to forego the chance to play in the UEFA Champions League next season by moving to 1. FC Cologne.

Ümit was given a warm farewell by teammates at the club's final training session in May when it was revealed that the left-back had decided to leave the Turkish champion for the German second-tier club, which paid 700,000 euros to sign him on a three-year deal. "There will be some advantages to playing in Germany," Ümit said. "My family and I are looking forward to learning the German culture and language. I have had some great achievements like winning titles with Fenerbahçe but when my contract ended I thought it would be good for me to play in Europe."

Daum connection

Ümit joined Fenerbahçe in the 2001-02 season from Gençlerbirliği and has been capped 41 times by Turkey. The 30-year-old won the league championship three times with Fenerbahçe in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2006-07 -- the first two titles coming under coach Christoph Daum, who is currently in charge at Cologne. Ümit, who can play left back, right back, center back and midfielder, scored 11 goals and made 44 assists during his stint at the Fener Yellow Canaries. *Istanbul Today's Zaman*

Synopsis of Hamit

Hamit Altintop, born on Dec. 8, 1982 in Gelsenkirchen, Germany is the identical twin brother of soccer player Halil Altintop. Hamit started his professional career in local German club Wattenscheid in 2000 along with his brother. As successful performances grabbed the attention of bigger clubs, Hamit was transferred to Schalke 04 in 2003, where he plays currently in a primarily defensive midfield role. Hamit played in the Champions League, scoring a wonderful goal against AC Milan and he also played in the semifinals of the UEFA cup. Hamit has joined Bayern Munich for the start of the 2007-08 season on a free transfer.

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