Strong impetus for German-Turkish cooperation

The first session of the German-Turkish *Partnering in Business with Germany* steering committee, which took place in Berlin on 29 April 2026, sends out a clear signal for the further development of economic cooperation between German and Turkish SMEs.

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The focus of the meeting was on the evaluation of the 2025 programme outcomes and the elaboration of specific recommendations for action for the future. In light of geopolitical changes and economic uncertainties, the aim is to further tap the business potential and expand existing cooperation. Representatives of the Ministry of Trade of Türkiye, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE), the Turkish Embassy, the Federal Foreign Office, the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), the German-Turkish Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Türkiye), the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB) and the GIZ attended the session. In addition, participants of the Turkish group which was visiting Germany at that time shared their experience.

Successful strategic partnership

Dr Nina Wunderlich, co-chair of the steering committee and Deputy Director-General responsible for EU economic policy in the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, said: “The cooperation with Türkiye as part of the *Partnering in Business with Germany* programme has developed very well since its beginning in September 2024. Last year, 40% of the Turkish managers signed either contracts or letters of intent with German companies, which is an impressive result. Based on these figures, Türkiye was considered in 2025 one of the top five partner countries of the programme in relation to economic outcomes.”

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Mr Hakan Akgün, co-chair of the steering committee and Deputy Director General for International Agreements and European Union in the Ministry of Trade of Türkiye, underlined the strategic importance. He said: “Germany is one of the most important trade partners of the Republic of Türkiye. In times of geopolitical challenges, it is crucial to have a strong and reliable partnership between German and Turkish companies. And the *Partnering in Business with Germany* programme is an essential pillar for developing mutual trust and strengthening cooperation between German and Turkish small and middle-sized companies.”

The close economic relationship between the two countries is a solid basis for this. Germany is Türkiye’s most important trading partner and one of the major investors in the country. At the same time, Türkiye is an important location for production for German companies and a strategic bridge between Europe and the Middle East. More than 8,000 German firms are active in the country. In spite of difficult conditions, Turkish imports from Germany rose by 11% to US$ 25 billion in the period January to October 2025. Demand is high, in particular in the fields of vehicles and vehicle parts, machinery, chemicals and electrical engineering. In return, Germany imports in particular textiles, vehicles, machinery and food from Türkiye.

Specific successes at company level

Current examples of participating companies show how effective the programme is in practice. Cem Sinan Bayazit from the company Element Proje AS gained valuable insights in German technologies for decarbonisation in industry and sees a lot of potential for cooperation. He said: “Participating in the programme provides major opportunities for me. Both in technical terms and personally, the programme offers new prospects for me and I became familiar with innovative technologies. I got important new impetus especially in the field of decarbonisation in industry.”

Ömer Faruk Özdemir, business development manager at KAAF, a Turkish manufacturer of battery-powered manoeuvering locomotives, also makes targeted use of the programme for the establishment of new partnerships. His company is preparing its entry into the German market and is planning to establish a plant in Germany at some point in the future. Mr Özdemir said: “We have established valuable contacts with German companies and identified specific opportunities for future cooperation. At the same time, we have gained a deep understanding of German business culture and see new possibilities for the promotion of joint projects.”

Further development looking ahead

In addition to the positive outcomes, possiblities for improvement were also identified. These include in particular an even more structured matchmaking of Turkish and German business representatives, a more flexible design of the programme format and greater involvement of women. It was underlined that a tailored target group in Türkiye for the programme is particularly important: the great majority of the participants are experienced managers from small and medium-sized enterprises. In 2026, there will be a greater focus on specific sectors. For the first time, there will also be

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