



STIFTUNG MERCATOR'S ENGAGEMENT IN TURKEY

PROMOTING ENCOUNTERS,
ACTING TOGETHER

DEAR GUESTS,

Stiftung Mercator has been promoting projects in and with Turkey for the past ten years. Our engagement began during a period of change, in which Turkey's political and economic significance for Europe was becoming more pronounced and mutual relations were shaped by the start of accession negotiations between Turkey and the European Union. Although relations between Europe and Turkey have become more complicated in recent years, we believe that many of our objectives still hold true: we want to contribute to this relationship by identifying and maximising the enormous potential offered by the close social and cultural ties between Germany and Turkey. By fostering personal exchanges and encounters, we have set ourselves the goal of achieving mutual understanding as a basis for joint action.

Alongside China and Europe, Turkey, as a European neighbour, became part of the key regional focus area of Stiftung Mercator's international programmes, in which our aim has been to create a dialogue between leading political, academic, and civil society actors and, above all, young people.

By means of a [strategic partnership with Sabancı University](#) and through the founding of the [German-Turkish Youth Bridge](#), we have been able to broaden our engagements to include key target groups and add many new partners to our network. Thanks to our work, German and Turkish pupils, teachers, journalists, students, academics, and practitioners now have the opportunity to come together, irrespective of any geographical or cultural boundaries.

Our engagement in Turkey is today an integral part of our newly founded Europe cluster, through which we want to strengthen European cohesion and Europe's ability to act. We believe that sustainable relations between Germany and Turkey are particularly important for a Europe that is facing common challenges on many levels. New projects, such as the [Turkey Europe Future Forum](#) and [Task Force 2023](#), underline the fact that we will only be able to find and implement possible solutions to common challenges in Europe by working together. This process encompasses all forces in society; and faced with current political tensions we regard our commitment to civil society dialogue as even more important than ever.

The official opening of our Istanbul Office marks yet another important milestone in our work in Turkey by highlighting our long-term commitment to dialogue and cooperation. Our staff will represent the foundation at the local level, maintain contact with our partners, explore new options for cooperation and, together with the team in Essen, supervise existing projects.

We also want to continue to take advantage of the potential offered by the close ties between Turkey, Germany, and Europe into the future, by engaging in dialogue and partnerships at different levels. Successful programmes, such as the [Mercator-IPC Fellowship](#) and [Blickwechsel. Comtemporary Turkey Studies](#) will begin their second funding phase in 2017, while new projects, such as the [German-Turkish Initiative for Cooperation on Refugee Relief](#) and the [German-Turkish Dialogue on the Rule of Law](#), are intended to provide impetus for the development of mutual relations. Together with our partners, we will continue to foster exchanges and encounters with a view to promoting trust and understanding as the basis for joint as well as reciprocal action.

THE EVOLUTION OF STIFTUNG MERCATOR'S TURKEY PORTFOLIO FROM 2006 TO TODAY

2006 – 2010

OCTOBER 2006

The “President Johannes Rau Programme” of the International Journalists’ Programmes (IJP) sponsors the first two-month exchange placements at an editorial office for German and Turkish journalists.

OCTOBER 2008

The youth exchange organisation AFS and Stiftung Mercator launch their first joint student exchange programme with Turkey.

DECEMBER 2010

Stiftung Mercator’s exchange programmes are brought together under the umbrella of the “Mercator Exchange”.

“Extending the scholarship programme to include Turkey represents a milestone in intercultural exchange.”

Mick Petersmann,
director of AFS



MAY 2011

Stiftung Mercator, the European Cultural Foundation, MitOst, Anadolu Kültür, and Istanbul Bilgi University initiate the “Tandem – Cultural Managers Exchange Turkey”. Its goal is to establish long-term cooperation between cultural organisations and cultural managers from Turkey and EU countries.

JULY 2011

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding marks the start of a strategic partnership between Stiftung Mercator and Sabancı University.

2011

2012



“Developing solutions for the challenges of the 21st century is one of our central objectives, both on an academic level and in practice.”

Fuat Keyman,
IPC director

FEBRUARY 2012

The official opening of the “Istanbul Policy Center - Sabancı University - Stiftung Mercator Initiative” marks the start of the largest German-Turkish project on a civil society level.

SEPTEMBER 2012

The first Mercator-IPC Fellows begin their work.

JUNE 2012

The European Stability Initiative draws up the first action recommendations for liberalisation of the Schengen visa requirements for Turkish citizens.

MARCH 2013

Launch event of “Global Turkey in Europe”.

APRIL 2013

Start of “IPC-Mercator Fellowship Programme” at the SWP Berlin.

AUGUST 2013

Stiftung Mercator increases the number of student exchange scholarships from 690 to 1,080.

“Turkey plays an important role in migration and refugee policy, in matters of security and energy supply, and for the future of the EU. Our fellows correct some of the misjudgements in Berlin and open up new perspectives.”

Günter Seufert,
senior fellow at the SWP-Berlin



OCTOBER 2013

The 4th Istanbul Forum is opened by then Turkish President Abdullah Gül, Stiftung Mercator Advisory Board member Ira Heß-Weller, and STRATIM-Director Suat Kınıklıoğlu.

2013



2014

JANUARY 2014

Launch of the interdisciplinary framework programme “Blickwechsel. Contemporary Turkey Studies”. During the course of five research projects, German and Turkish academics explore different aspects of contemporary Turkish society, business, and politics.



JUNE 2014

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier opens the German-Turkish Youth Bridge.

“The Youth Bridge has the potential to become another beacon project in our relations with Turkey.”

Frank-Walter Steinmeier,
Germany’s foreign minister

“The Turkey Europe Future Forum is an important step toward more cooperation and collaboration. Using my patronage to support young leaders is something that is, therefore, particularly close to my heart.”

Federica Mogherini,
EU foreign affairs representative

MARCH 2015

The German-Turkish Youth Bridge and the Turkish National Agency sign a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen German-Turkish school and youth exchanges.

JUNE 2015

The Mercator Program Center for International Affairs (MPC) initiates the “Turkey Europe Future Forum”, which under the patronage of Federica Mogherini establishes a network of young European leaders.

AUGUST 2015

The “Go International!” programme supports internships abroad to enable apprentices to acquire international experience.

2015



2016



“In the wake of mutual misunderstandings it is more important than ever to talk to each other”

Nereo Garcia Penalver,
Turkey Europe Future
Forum participant in 2016

JANUARY 2016

First meeting of the “Task Force Turkey 2023”, designed to foster political dialogue between Turkey, the EU and the USA.

OCTOBER 2016

Opening of the Istanbul Office

OCTOBER 2016

Launch of the “German-Turkish Initiative for Cooperation on Refugee Relief” as part of a cooperation between Anadolu Kültür and the Landesweite Koordinierungsstelle Kommunale Integrationszentren, LaKI.

“Before my stay I had not been aware that Germany and Turkey face the same challenges and can learn a lot from one another.”

Peter Mock,
Mercator-IPC fellow
2015/16

JANUARY 2017

The strategic partnership between Stiftung Mercator, Sabanci University and the “Mercator-IPC Fellowship Programme” continues, thanks to a second funding phase.

JANUARY 2017

Start of the second funding phase, including for new projects, of the interdisciplinary framework programme “Blickwechsel. Contemporary Turkey Studies”.

“We want to take even greater advantage of the potential offered by the close ties between Germany and Turkey in future by engaging in dialogue and partnership on all kinds of different levels.”

Michael Schwarz,
executive director of
Stiftung Mercator

2017

ABOUT STIFTUNG MERCATOR AND THE ISTANBUL OFFICE

Stiftung Mercator is a private and independent foundation. Through its work, it strives for a society characterised by an openness to the world, solidarity, and equal opportunities. In this context, it focuses on strengthening Europe; increasing the educational success of disadvantaged children and young people, especially those of migrant origin; driving forward climate change mitigation; and promoting science and the humanities. Stiftung Mercator symbolises the connection between academic expertise and practical project experience. One of Germany's leading foundations, it is active both nationally and internationally. Stiftung Mercator feels a strong sense of loyalty to the Ruhr region, the home of the founding family and the foundation's headquarters.

In establishing an Istanbul office, Stiftung Mercator is highlighting its commitment to intensive exchange and close cooperation

between Germany and Turkey within a unified Europe. We Europeans can only find and implement solutions to global challenges in today's complex and multipolar world if we work together. We believe that sustainable relations between Germany and Turkey are particularly important if Europe is to be capable of action.

Registered in September 2015, the Istanbul Office at Sabancı University's Minerva Palas is a key element of the foundation's work in its Europe cluster. The staff of the Istanbul office represent Stiftung Mercator at the local level, maintain contact with partners and, together with the team in Essen, oversee ongoing projects in Turkey.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our team in Istanbul.

Stiftung Mercator GmbH

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