



08 May 2026 -11:29

Belgian economic mission to Türkiye focuses on growth, innovation and partnership

From 10 May, Her Majesty the Queen will lead a Belgian economic mission to Türkiye. She will be accompanied by an official delegation, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Maxime Prévot and Minister for Defence and Foreign Trade Theo Francken. The mission opens a new and ambitious chapter in relations between the two countries, almost fourteen years after the previous Belgian economic mission to Türkiye.

The mission will visit the country's two main economic hubs: Istanbul (10 to 12 May) and Ankara (13 and 14 May). Her Majesty the Queen will take part in the programme in Istanbul, after which the official delegation will travel on to Ankara.

In total, the mission brings together 428 participants: 194 companies, 17 federations and chambers of commerce, 8 universities and various Belgian government departments. It is jointly organised by the three regional trade and investment promotion agencies (Flanders Investment & Trade, hub.brussels and AWEX), the Foreign Trade Agency and the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

"The world has changed. Our companies must be present where the opportunities lie, and today those opportunities also lie in Türkiye," says Minister Prévot. "A market of 85 million consumers, a NATO ally, a customs union with the EU and a country undergoing rapid transformation. Belgium must be part of that."

Strengthened cooperation in a changing context

In recent years, Türkiye has developed into a major economic and geopolitical player. In an international context marked by geopolitical uncertainty, companies are increasingly seeking resilience through nearshoring (cooperating with neighboring countries) and friendshoring (cooperating with partner countries).

In this regard, Türkiye is a strategic choice: it forms a bridge between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, is geographically close to Belgium, is economically integrated with the EU through the customs union, and is also a NATO ally and a candidate country for the EU. The country also has a well-developed transport infrastructure by land, sea, and air.

"Türkiye is an attractive market of 85 million people and an emerging industrial power. At the same time, it serves as a bridge for Europe to the markets of the Middle East and Central Asia. Our bilateral trade currently stands at around 8 billion euros a year. That can and must be significantly higher. We are traveling to Türkiye with a delegation of more than 300 businesspeople. We are not going for the sake of symbolism, but to do business. I have every confidence in the success of this economic mission," says Minister Francken.

Strong economic relations

Belgium and Türkiye already maintain strong economic ties. Türkiye is Belgium's fifth-largest trading partner outside the European Union. In 2025, Belgian exports to Türkiye amounted to 6.5 billion euros, compared with imports of 5.6 billion euros.



There is also strong momentum in the investment sector. Belgium is one of the most important foreign investors in Türkiye, whilst Turkish investment in Belgium continues to grow. Recent projects illustrate this mutual interest, such as the Ciner Group's glass factory in Lommel and the announced Synpet plastic recycling plant in Antwerp.

Focus on five strategic sectors

The mission focuses on five strategic sectors that reflect the shared priorities and innovation-driven growth of both countries: the green and energy transition, aerospace and defence, ports, logistics and transport, pharmaceuticals and biotech, and digital technology. The programme comprises nearly 35 activities: seminars, workshops, company visits, and B2B meetings.

In Istanbul, the focus includes cooperation between Belgian and Turkish ports. By bringing together key players from both countries, the aim is to enhance the security of critical port infrastructure and promote sustainable innovation. At the same time, this offers new opportunities to further develop long-standing maritime and economic relations.

In addition, Belgian and Turkish representatives and stakeholders from the life sciences sector will come together to identify joint priorities and promote sustainable cooperation in the fields of research, innovation, production and healthcare. Particular attention will be paid to rare diseases and the role of women in the sector.

In Ankara, Belgian defence companies will have the opportunity to present their activities. Various meetings will bring Belgian and Turkish companies together to explore concrete opportunities for cooperation. Seminars and workshops will provide local partners with insight into Belgian expertise whilst offering a better understanding of the priorities of the Turkish authorities and their flagship projects. Visits to local companies and to Belgian subsidiaries in Türkiye round off the programme.

Political dialogue and new agreements

In addition to the economic programme, the mission also includes a series of meetings between the Belgian and Turkish authorities, including with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan, Minister of Trade Ömer Bolat and Minister of Defence Yaşar Güler. These contacts are intended to deepen bilateral relations and open up new opportunities for cooperation. During the mission, various agreements will also be signed, including in the fields of defence and social security.

With this economic mission, Belgium and Türkiye are reaffirming their shared ambition to further strengthen their partnership and to work together towards open, sustainable trade and forward-looking economic growth.



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