

turizm aktüel

Türkiye

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Türkiye

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ITF IS STRONGER THIS YEAR
WITH ITS INTERNATIONAL
PURCHASING PROGRAM

METE VARDAR:

TÜRKİYE MAINTAINS ITS
POSITION AS A STRONG
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Hüdavendigar Cad. No: 22 Kat: 5
Sirkeci- Fatih / İstanbul
Tel: +90 212 511 25 61
e-mail: info@turizmaktuel.com
www.turizmaktuel.com

**OWNER AND
MANAGING EDITOR**

Sahibi ve Sorumlu

Yazı İşleri Müdürü

Hasan ARSLAN

harslan@turizmaktuel.com

**CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR**

Kurumsal İletişim Koordinatörü

Hakan METİN

hakan@turizmaktuel.com

GENERAL COORDINATOR

Genel Koordinatör

Özcan MUTLU

ozcan@turizmaktuel.com

**MEDITERRANEAN
AREA MANAGER**

Akdeniz Bölge Temsilcisi

Halil ÖNCÜ

info@turizmaktuel.com

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

İngilizce Çeviri

Nazlı Ece MUTLU

ece_demirbag@hotmail.com

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TÜRKİYE WILL BE THE CENTER OF CONGRESS TOURISM

Congresses are essentials of the tourism sector with its high profile participants. For the congress tourism that started to accelerate after a period of slowing down, new investments are on their way. Istanbul being the locomotive is followed by Antalya, İzmir and Ankara. In Türkiye annually around 2000 national and international congresses are held. Istanbul is leading the list. There are 3 congress centers in Istanbul with world standards and strong technical infrastructure: Lütfi Kırdar Congress and Exhibition Center with the capacity of 2000 people, Istanbul Congress Center with the capacity of 3700 people, Haliç Congress Center with the capacity of 3000 people. Has the growing capacity to serve the sector and the world with meetings, incentives, congresses and events for the last 40 years with world standards and cutting-edge technology.

Türkiye is at a very important point in the industry and a very preferable destination because of the geographical location. Service quality of the sector has reached a high level with the provided venue, technical equipment, creating thinking and design. 90% of the event and tourism service offered biggest companies of the world received positive feedback. Digital events developed in the last years in the world has been used in all events with current standard. Istanbul being the first to be chosen because of its location on 2 continents and then the other cities of Anatolia host MICE events and different organizations with the geographical beauties, historical texture and previous civilizations. International film industry, documentary industry, advertisements prefers the present natural wonders of Istanbul and Anatolia with the local hospitality.

The guests visiting Türkiye want to come back and suggest their friends to visit Türkiye. Istanbul has become an attraction center with the luxurious hotels, congress centers, events, cultural and artistic organization, entertainment activities and malls.

Internationally corporate events, weddings, international sports activities are held in MICE and event industry. For this big constructions we're finished and inaugurated with the cutting-edge technological infrastructure.

In Türkiye numerous cultural, artistic festivals and concert organization are held and internationals artists come to perform their art. With these activities spread in 365 days, there cities that live 24 hours.

Turkish event companies organize different, creative and high tech events in other countries especially in the close ones. Turkish construction sector and industry firms are world widely known because of the high quality work and service provided by the managers, businessmen and workers in different locations for the chain companies.

Turkish MICE agencies are awarded in foreign countries because of the good work they offer. Türkiye will be an attraction point again like it used to be in the previous decades with its destinations and services.

HASAN ARSLAN
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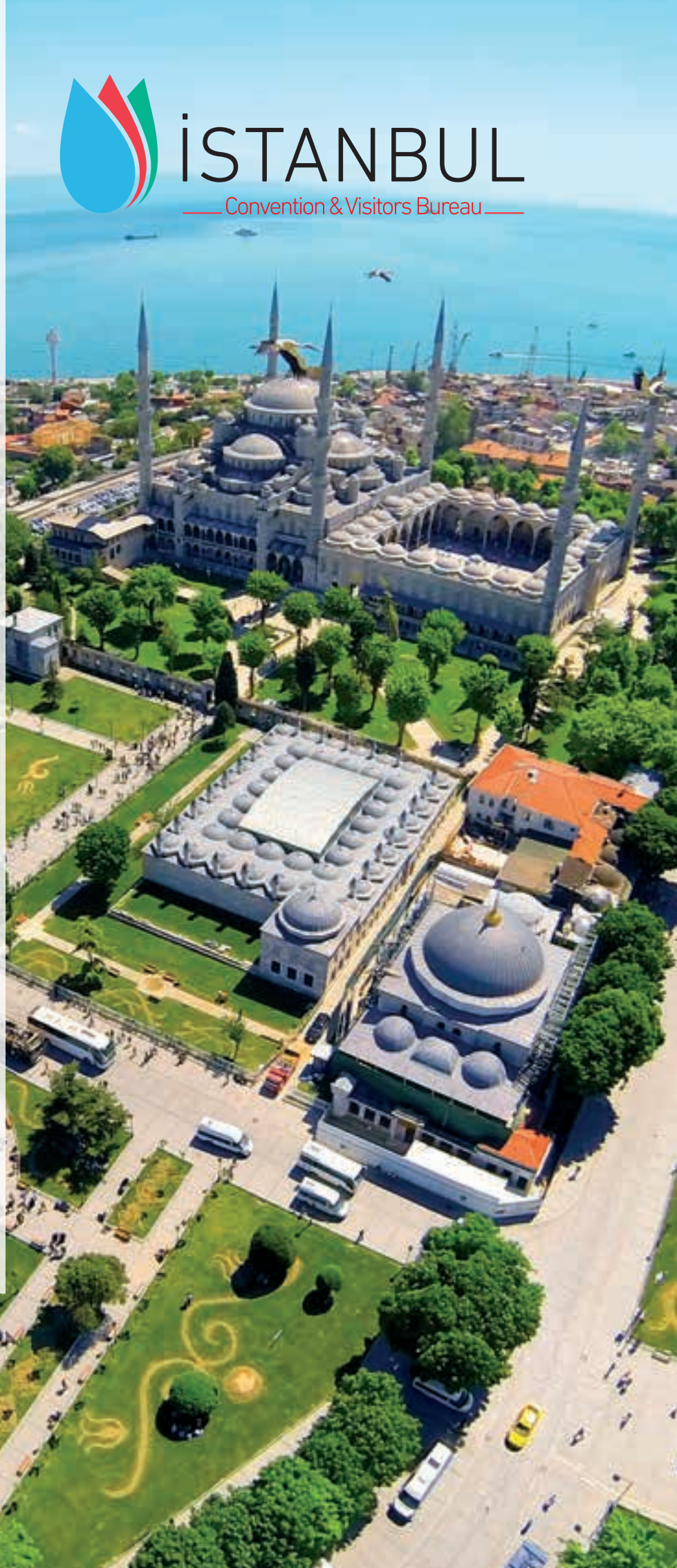
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İSTANBUL

— Convention & Visitors Bureau —





TÜRKİYE EXPECTS MAJOR TOURISM BOOST AS FORMULA 1 RETURNS

Formula 1 will return to Türkiye's Istanbul Park from 2027 under a new five-year agreement that will keep the Turkish Grand Prix on the calendar through the 2031 season.

The deal was reached with Türkiye's Youth and Sports Ministry, while the Turkish Automobile Sports Federation (TOSFED) will serve as Formula 1's delivery partner for the events. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan welcomed the return of the race during the Formula 1 Türkiye Grand Prix promotion program held at the Dolmabahçe Working Office in Istanbul on April 24, saying Istanbul Park would host "exciting" races for five seasons between 2027 and 2031. Erdoğan said Formula 1 has a strong following in Türkiye, reaching around

19 million people in the country and followed by about 7.5 million people on social media.

He recalled that Türkiye had hosted Formula 1 nine times before, including seven races between 2005 and 2011 and two more during the COVID-19 period in 2020 and 2021.

"The first race in 2005 broke a record in the history of the Republic with over 110,000 spectators in the stands alone," Erdoğan said, adding that



Istanbul Park had become one of the most memorable circuits on the Formula 1 calendar.

He said Türkiye's return to the calendar reflected confidence in the country's organizational capacity, sports and health infrastructure, and hospitality. "As Türkiye, we will host the races with a flawless organization in every aspect," he said.

Formula 1 President and CEO Stefano Domenicali and FIA President

Mohammed Ben Sulayem also attended the program and delivered remarks.

After his speech, Erdoğan pressed a button for the symbolic start of the 2027 Formula 1 Türkiye Grand Prix. A Formula 1 test car driven by Red Bull driver Yuki Tsunoda also traveled from Galataport through Karaköy to Dolmabahçe as part of the event.

TOSFED President Eren Üçlertoprağı later presented Erdoğan with an F1 steering wheel.

The return of Formula 1 is expected to bring a significant tourism and promotion boost to Istanbul.

Estimates cited in the presentation put the expected annual contribution to Türkiye at around \$200 million to \$250 million, with about 200,000 local and foreign visitors expected during the race week. Istanbul Park first joined the Formula 1 calendar in 2005 and is known for its 5.33-kilometer layout and challenging Turn 8. Türkiye last hosted the race in 2021, when Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas won at Istanbul Park.

For endless holiday joy, all you need is Jolly!





Tourism sector urged to prioritize domestic market in 2026

Turkish hotels must pivot to local travelers to survive 2026, Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) President Firuz Bağlıkaya has warned, urging the industry to slash domestic prices to maintain occupancy.



At the TÜRSAB Tourism Congress in Antalya, industry leaders discussed the impact of the Middle East conflict on Türkiye's tourism sector, noting that the initial shock has been overcome, the wave of cancellations has ended and reservations have begun again. However, according to sector representatives, 2026 is expected to be a "last-minute year," with holidaymakers choosing to book closer to their travel dates rather than months in advance. Bağlıkaya, who delivered the opening speech at the gathering, emphasized that the pressure on the tourism industry is increasing day by day due to the war. He explained that the first reaction after the outbreak of war was cancellations of around 15–20 percent,

but now there are no cancellations, only a slowdown in reservation flows of about 20–25 percent. Bağlıkaya pointed out that reactions vary by country: Russian tourists have not canceled at all, while Germans and northern Europeans have shown greater sensitivity. He predicted that once the war ends, the season will shift decisively toward last-minute bookings, declaring, "2026 will be the year of last-minute reservations." Reflecting on 2025, he recalled that high prices had left hotels empty, but this year, uncertainty is causing consumers to delay bookings, with no urgency to reserve early. Bağlıkaya stressed that accommodation providers must revise their pricing strategies for domestic tourists. "Hotels should offer the lowest

possible prices to the local market so that they remain full and the sector stays dynamic," he said, underlining that the industry must give great importance to the domestic market in 2026. Mete Vardar, Chairman of Jolly, agreed that the domestic market will be more active and influential in pricing decisions this year, predicting that its share of capacity will rise. Bağlıkaya also warned that rising fuel costs are increasing airline expenses, which could push tourists toward closer destinations. "We are a destination reached by air. When ticket prices rise from 300 euros to 400–500 euros, tourists will prefer nearer countries. Unless fuel prices normalize or subsidies are provided, travelers may choose other destinations," he cautioned.

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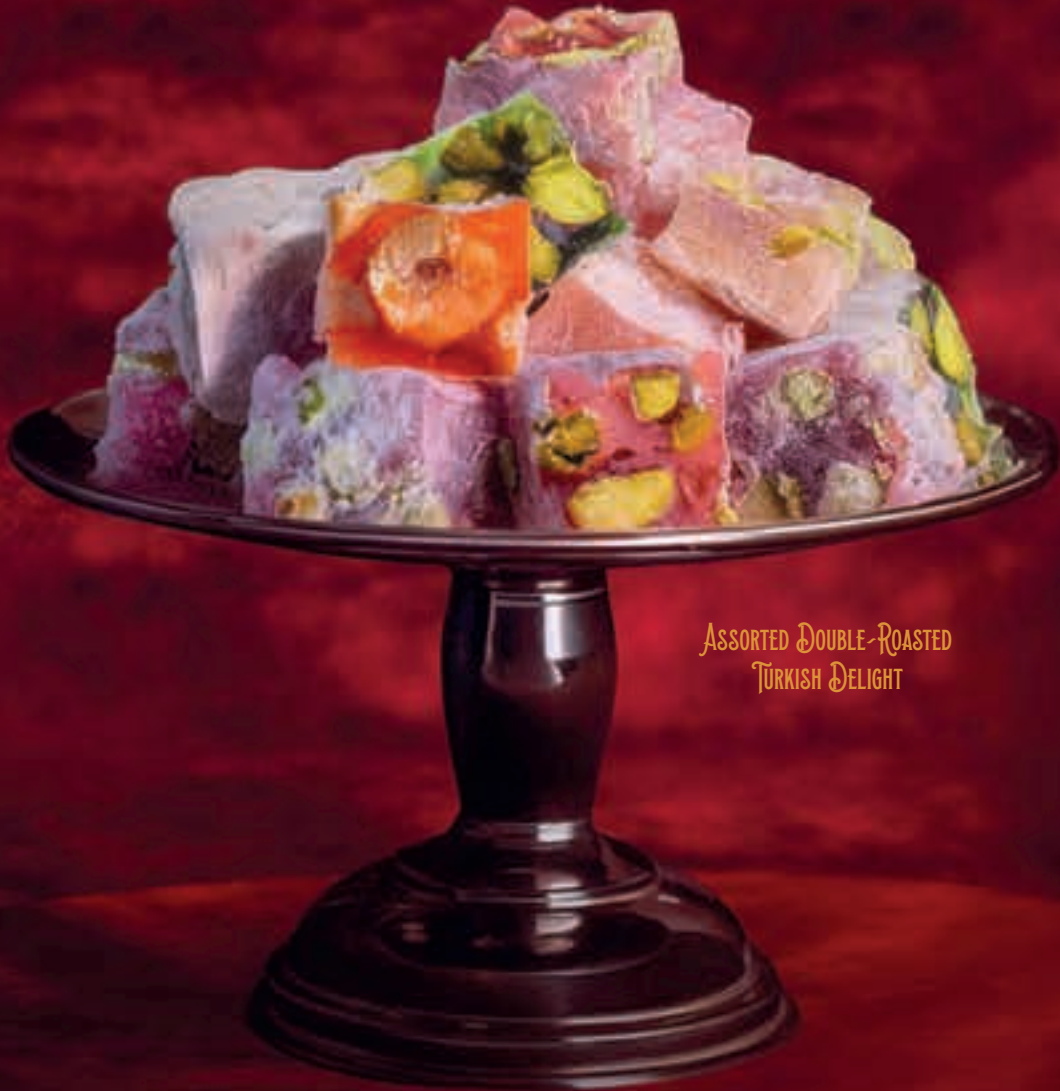
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INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR **ORIENTBANK** HOTEL AND **ORIENT OCCIDENT HOTEL**

Orientbank Hotel Istanbul Autograph Collection and Orient Occident Hotel Istanbul Autograph Collection, operating under Savur GYO, were deemed worthy of the "2025 British Airways Holidays Customer Excellence Award," one of the prestigious evaluations of the global tourism sector.

In the evaluation carried out by British Airways Holidays in cooperation with Feefo, the world's largest verified customer review platform, as a result of scoring under critical headings such as location, service quality, cleanliness and sleep experience, both hotels achieved a remarkable average of 4.9 out of 5. With this high score, Orientbank Hotel Istanbul Autograph Collection and Orient Occident Hotel Istanbul Autograph Collection ranked among the highest-rated hotels worldwide. Celebrating its 70th year in 2025, British Airways Holidays also analyzed 104,444 independent reviews this year within the scope of the Customer Excellence Awards, which has completed its 10th year, and awarded 949 hotels globally. A strong success story extending from the Historical Peninsula to the global stage

The hotels under Savur GYO, which stand out in the tourism sector with a customer satisfaction-focused, experiential and distinctive service approach, draw attention with the international awards they have won. Located in Sirkeci, one of



the most important centers of Istanbul's historical and cultural heritage, Orientbank Hotel Istanbul Autograph Collection and Orient Occident Hotel Istanbul Autograph Collection stand out not only with their prestigious location, but also with their original concepts that bring historical texture together with modern comfort. Both hotels, which further strengthen their positions every year with the successes they have achieved in the international arena, continue to be among the strong representatives of Turkish tourism on a global scale.

Special Achievement Award at Marriott Global Shining Stars Both hotels crowned their success in the international arena by being deemed worthy of the "Special Achievement" award, given for the first time in Marriott history, at the Shining Stars Award Ceremony organized by Marriott Global in Dubai in 2024. In 2025, they also continued their leadership with the performance scores they achieved from the beginning of the year to date (YTD), continuing to maintain their 1st and 2nd places in their own categories.



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TÜRKİYE SETS 2,000-SHIP TARGET FOR 2028 IN CRUISE TOURISM



Türkiye aims to steadily expand cruise traffic over the next three years, targeting 2,000 ships annually by 2028, Transport and Infrastructure Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu said.

The upward trend seen in 2025 is expected to continue, with cruise ship arrivals projected to reach 1,500 by the end of 2026 and 1,750 in 2027, according to ministry projections.

TÜRKİYE SHIFTS FROM STOPOVER TO CRUISE HUB

Türkiye continues to invest in infrastructure and streamline trade processes to better utilize its tourism potential, Uraloglu told state-run

Anadolu Agency, noting that transport and tourism remain closely linked sectors supporting economic and social development. "Türkiye has moved beyond being just a stopover and has become a main destination in cruise tourism," he said, noting that cruise passengers contribute to local economies through spending on food, retail, and cultural activities. Homeport operations—where passengers embark or disembark—also generate additional value through logistics

and tourism services. Authorities are working to strengthen Türkiye's role in Mediterranean cruise tourism by improving service standards and coordinating with industry stakeholders, Uraloglu said, adding that the goal is to position the country as one of the leading cruise hubs in the region.

CRUISE PASSENGERS TOP 2M IN 2025 AS KUSADASI LEADS PORTS

Turkish ports hosted 1,375 cruise ship calls in 2025, marking a 15.1% increase compared to the previous year, while passenger numbers rose by 13.2% to reach 2.13 million, surpassing the 2 million mark for the first time since 2013. Kusadasi ranked as Türkiye's busiest cruise port with 617 ship calls, followed by Istanbul ports with 265 and Bodrum with 116. Passenger traffic followed the same pattern, with Kusadasi handling 995,843 passengers, Istanbul ports 625,517, and Bodrum 138,166 over the same period.





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TÜRKİYE: A PREMIER DESTINATION FOR MEETINGS & EVENTS

Türkiye has firmly established itself as a global leader in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry, offering world-class venues, seamless accessibility, and unparalleled hospitality. Over the past two decades, İstanbul has risen as a top-tier player in the international meetings market, attracting major congresses and corporate events. With its state-of-the-art congress centres, premium hotel chains, and groundbreaking urban development projects, Türkiye continues to secure its leading position in the industry. Beyond its breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and renowned culinary scene, Türkiye is redefining the MICE experience with cutting-edge facilities and innovative industry initiatives.

NEW COOPERATION TO ELEVATE İSTANBUL AS A GLOBAL CONGRESS DESTINATION

İstanbul is taking a bold step forward to solidify its position as one of the world's leading congress destinations through an unprecedented public-private sector collaboration. A new strategic cooperation has been

launched, bringing together key stakeholders from the Turkish meetings and events industry to streamline the bidding process, enhance delegate participation, and provide comprehensive support packages for international congresses.

This initiative is spearheaded by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, İstanbul Chamber of Commerce, İstanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau (ICVB), Turkish Airlines, Pegasus Airlines, the Hotel Association of Türkiye (TUROB), and İstanbul's two major airports – İGA İstanbul Airport and Sabiha Gökçen Airport (SAW).

A UNIFIED EFFORT FOR SEAMLESS CONGRESS HOSTING

With this powerful alliance, İstanbul is introducing a holistic approach to congress tourism, ensuring that international event organisers receive seamless support in bringing their congresses to the city. The cooperation focuses on:

Easy Bidding Process: A unified and simplified approach to international congress bidding ensures that event

organisers can navigate the process efficiently and confidently.

Delegate Boosting Initiatives:

Tailored marketing efforts and strategic campaigns to attract a larger global audience to congresses hosted in İstanbul.

Congress Support Packages:

Financial and logistical incentives, promotional assistance, and customised city experiences to enhance the appeal of İstanbul as a premier MICE destination.

A key highlight of this initiative is the upcoming Public-Private Sector Industry Declaration, a formal commitment by all partners to actively welcome, support, and facilitate major international congresses in İstanbul. This declaration underscores Türkiye's dedication to creating a thriving, business-friendly environment for the global meetings industry.

With İstanbul's world-class infrastructure, unmatched connectivity, and rich cultural heritage, this new initiative marks a transformative moment in the city's MICE landscape—making it more accessible, attractive, and competitive on the global stage.

This is just the beginning of a new era for İstanbul as a congress capital. The collective vision and expertise of



this partnership will ensure that the city remains at the forefront of global congress tourism, ready to host the world's most prestigious events. For further details, stay tuned as we unveil the full scope of support packages and opportunities for international congress organizers.

WHY İSTANBUL? A GLOBAL HUB FOR INNOVATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND CONNECTIVITY

For centuries, İstanbul has been a center of power, knowledge, and commerce, shaping the course of civilizations and fostering global exchange. Today, the city continues to lead as an international hub for congresses and events, offering a dynamic ecosystem where business, science, technology, and culture thrive together. Straddling two continents, İstanbul is a world-class convention destination, home to purpose-built congress centres, five-star accommodations, and unrivalled accessibility. The city's Congress Valley, a hub for international events, seamlessly integrates historic charm with cutting-edge technology. Attendees can explore Michelin-starred restaurants, vibrant nightlife, luxury shopping, and centuries-old landmarks, making every business trip an unforgettable experience. İstanbul's urban transformation projects, such as

Galataport and Tersane, are introducing new purpose-built venues that redefine conference and exhibition spaces.

ANTALYA: A YEAR-ROUND MICE PARADISE

Boasting 300 days of sunshine, Antalya is one of the world's top convention and exhibition destinations. With more than 300 five-star hotels and over 175,000 convention seats, it has hosted high-profile events, including the G20 Summit. The city's extensive tourism infrastructure, stunning Mediterranean beaches, ancient ruins, and exquisite Mediterranean cuisine make it a premier MICE location.

BODRUM: THE LUXURY INCENTIVE CAPITAL

Renowned for its coastal resorts, sophisticated venues, and luxury lifestyle, Bodrum is a sought-after destination for incentive travel. With direct flights from major European capitals, it offers exclusive Michelin Guide-listed dining, Blue Flag beaches, high-end shopping, and iconic experiences such as blue cruises. Recognized by American Express Travel's 'Trending Destinations 2024', Bodrum blends Aegean charm with world-class luxury.

İZMİR: THE AEGEAN'S BUSINESS & LIFESTYLE HUB

Ranked as the city with the highest

quality of life in Türkiye, İzmir offers a dynamic mix of modern infrastructure, rich history, and an exceptional culinary scene. As home to UNESCO-listed Ephesus and Pergamon, the city provides an inspiring setting for MICE events. Recognized by Lonely Planet's 'Best in Travel 2024', İzmir captivates visitors with its vibrant city life, idyllic coastal towns, and renowned wine routes.

CAPPADOCIA: A BOUTIQUE INCENTIVE DESTINATION

For those seeking an unforgettable incentive experience, Cappadocia is a dream destination. Famous for its otherworldly landscapes, cave hotels, and hot air balloon rides, the region offers a one-of-a-kind setting for intimate meetings and exclusive corporate retreats. Its rich history, underground cities, and unique natural formations make it a spectacular venue for boutique events.

TÜRKİYE: YOUR NEXT MICE DESTINATION

With world-class facilities, seamless accessibility, and a commitment to innovation, Türkiye is the ultimate destination for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. Whether in İstanbul's dynamic metropolis, Antalya's sun-kissed coastline, or Bodrum's luxurious escapes, Türkiye offers an unrivalled MICE experience, where business meets inspiration.

“a golden start to the day”



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All Seasons Hotel Istanbul is located in the historical Fatih district, close to the tourism and cultural richness of Istanbul, 40 km from the newly opened Istanbul Airport. Fındıklı tramway station is 7 minute and 50 m away from the hotel, and you can reach the popular places such as historical peninsula, Grand Bazaar, Spice Bazaar, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace, Taksim Square and Istanbul shopping / entertainment centers with a fast and comfortable journey.



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Our hotel providing the services to its guests to meet with Turkey's rich history and cultural heritage and to live an unforgettable holiday experience serving with the mission.

While presenting the unique and fascinating beauties of Istanbul to our guests with famous Turkish hospitality, you will find the comfort and comfort you need beyond your expectations.

We are waiting you in All Seasons Hotel Istanbul for an accommodation experience in which you will live Istanbul to the fullest and comfort of your home.

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ICVB Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors Bahadır Yaşık said, "Our goal is for Istanbul to enter the top 5 cities in congress tourism. We have also started the construction of the new hall that will increase the capacity of our area at ITO's Istanbul Expo Center in Yeşilköy by 40 percent."

BAHADIR YAŞIK: OUR GOAL IS FOR İSTANBUL TO ENTER THE TOP 5 CITIES IN CONGRESS TOURISM

The members who are on the board of directors and executive committee of ICVB consist of leading names and institutions from the public and private sectors.

Bahadır Yaşık, Member of the Board of Directors of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ITO) and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Istanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau-ICVB, told Turizm Aktüel about the work of ICVB, Türkiye's first and Istanbul's active destination promotion office, and the future route of Istanbul tourism.

How was ICVB, which has made major contributions to the promotion and

branding of Istanbul on international platforms, established? What structural changes has it undergone from the date it was founded until today?

ICVB, Türkiye's first destination promotion office, was established in 1997 within TUGEV-Tourism Development and Education Foundation as a non-profit, impartial destination promotion and marketing organization. Since the day it was founded, the members who have

been on ICVB's board of directors and executive committee have consisted of leading names and institutions from the public and private sectors. This structure made a major contribution to the development of ICVB. ICVB accepts private sector organizations operating in the fields of tourism and congress tourism as members. ICVB has a member profile consisting of companies operating in the tourism and MICE sector such as Istanbul's

Congress centers, 5- and 4-star hotels, agencies organizing congresses (PCO/DMC), restaurants and similar service providers.

The way ICVB operates within the scope of its mission, which can be summarized as increasing the destination's share in the relevant market through the promotion and marketing of the destination as a whole to the national and international congress sector, is generally the same as the operation and standards of international congress bureaus.

What is the founding purpose of ICVB?

The founding purpose of ICVB is to help the marketing of Istanbul's infrastructure and organizational power in the fields of congresses, conferences, fairs and exhibitions by promoting them at home and abroad. It is to strengthen congress and conference tourism in our country by ensuring Istanbul's branding, and to ensure the development of tourism by contributing to the promotion of the city and the country.

What are ICVB's main activities and what activities have been carried out in line with its founding purpose until today?

ICVB carries out promotion and marketing activities with the aim of strengthening the Istanbul brand in the congress-meeting sector, ensuring its recognition and market continuity. We can exemplify these activities as representing and promoting Istanbul with the Istanbul destination stand at international tourism and congress tourism fairs, participating in international workshops and sales exchanges, bringing international congresses to Istanbul by meeting with high-level decision-makers through lobbying activities, supporting national associations during the preparation stage of congress candidacy files and in congress presentations, hosting foreign decision-makers and buyers during inspection and promotional trips they organize in Istanbul, producing and

distributing printed-visual promotional materials such as the Istanbul Visitor's Guide and Istanbul Meeting Planner's Guide and similar materials, developing business opportunities by participating in many activities of international organizations such as general assemblies, workshops, sales trips and similar activities, as well as representing our city and our country on the international platform. ICVB has been managing and continuing all of its activities in line with its founding

ensures the representation of Istanbul in these organizations.

What is the place and importance of congress, fair and conference tourism in Istanbul tourism in general?

For this, it is necessary to evaluate in general what kind of importance the meeting and congress sector has for destinations. Congress tourism ensures the development of destinations. Congress delegates are tourists whose purchasing power, depending on their



purpose without interruption since the date it was established.

Which leading organizations of the international meetings sector is ICVB a member of?

ICVB has membership in organizations such as ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association), UN Tourism (United Nations World Tourism Organization), CityDNA (City Destinations Alliance), Destinations International, MPI (Meeting Professionals International) and HOTREC (Association of Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe), which are among the leading organizations of the international meetings sector. ICVB has the characteristic of being the only authorized organization that actively

socio-economic status, is 3-4 times higher than that of normal tourists, and therefore these people with a high travel culture bring significant vitality to the entire commercial life of the city, including its hotels, restaurants, museums, entertainment venues, shopping malls, stores, banks and credit card companies, and increase tax revenues.

At the same time, they have the potential to return in the future with family, friends and business groups to a city they left with pleasure. Therefore, they fit the definition of qualified tourists with high purchasing power, whose numbers we would like to increase for Istanbul. The word-of-mouth promotion power of these

people also plays an important role in the promotion of our city. Meetings and congresses bring the world of science to our doorstep and contribute to the increase of the existing level of expertise in society in important subjects and fields such as technology and medicine, and to academic life. When and where congresses will be held is decided long in advance, and important preparations are made during this process, and they are difficult to cancel. Therefore, the congress sector is not affected as quickly and deeply by periodic political, economic and similar crises as other types of tourism.

The congress sector requires architecture, technology, qualified infrastructure and again qualified service. This means urban improvement or development regarding the general image and life of the city. Again, as is known, the congress sector requires a high-quality service supply and specialization with the customer profile served, the technical equipment expected from facilities and the service standard. This brings with it development and progress in the tourism sector in areas such as manpower, technology use and similar areas.

What is Istanbul's place and importance in the world congress sector?

When the distribution of the world congress market across continents and countries is examined, it is observed that traditional North American and Western European countries have reached a certain saturation, whereas the share of Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Asia Pacific countries in the congress market is increasing every year. Istanbul has been experiencing a gradual rise in the congress sector especially for the last 8 years, the number of congresses held in our city increases every year and the increase in demand for our city continues. We are in an intensive work tempo



to continue this rise and to bring a greater number of large international congresses with broad participation to Istanbul.

How does congress tourism come to the fore in the promotion of Istanbul?

Our goal is for Istanbul to enter the top 5 cities in congress tourism. We have also started the construction of the new hall that will increase the capacity of ITO's Istanbul Expo Center in Yeşilköy by 40 percent. The work carried out through the Istanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau, that is, Istanbul's official promotion office, is of great importance. We work more with a focus on congress tourism. Of course, there is also the visitor side, but our main focus is congress tourism.

Did Istanbul make a big leap in the ranking of world congress cities?

In 2018, when our president Şekib Avdagiç took office, Istanbul was ranked 133rd in the ranking of world congress cities. In 2024, it achieved great success by ranking 15th in Europe and 20th in the world in the ranking of congress cities. We also placed 8th in the world in the list of the "Top 8 Cities for Medical Sciences Meetings in 2024," announced for the first time. In 2024, we hosted 86 international association congresses in our city according to world ranking criteria. In 2025, our

number of congresses also increased. The data for 2025 will be announced during the IMEX Frankfurt fair. We aim and foresee that Istanbul will enter the top 10 within the next few years.

Why is congress tourism important?

The congress sector means prestige and branding within the global market for cities. Because the visitors coming in this field have a more intellectual profile, a high spending level, and spend three-four times more compared to the classical tourist. In addition, these guests who come to Istanbul for congresses tend to come again afterward with their families, and by conveying the experience they had in the city to the high-level circle around them, they create a multiplier effect in the increase in the number of visitors.

Is the strong congress calendar for 2026 and beyond clear?

As of 2026, more than 100 congresses have been confirmed in Istanbul. In fact, some of these congresses extend until 2030. This year, we will host approximately 25 thousand international academics and doctors in Istanbul in only three major congresses. We foresee that the contribution of only these 3 major congresses to the city economy will be around approximately 100 million dollars.



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UMUT KAYA: TÜRKİYE, THE NEW POWER HUB OF THE MICE INDUSTRY

Umut Kaya, President of TEODER and Chairman of Boss Event Marketing Agency, comments on Türkiye's evolving role in the global MICE landscape: "We are no longer just a country that hosts events and welcomes guests. We are a hub that designs experiences, creates value, and sets direction." According to Kaya, Türkiye is preparing to become one of the most influential players in the global events industry in the near future.



You have been providing corporate services in the Events and MICE segments for many years. In your opinion, what defines true success in the events industry?

Today, defining success in the events industry solely through flawless execution would be a significant understatement. Success is now measured by an event's ability to create economic, cultural, and strategic impact.

From my perspective, an event must deliver success across three fundamental layers: participant experience, contribution to brand and business objectives, and long-term impact and memorability.

As Umut Kaya, I can clearly state that people no longer attend events they want to be part of experiences. If an event does not leave a lasting impression, does not resonate in the digital world, and does not create transformation, then even if it is technically well executed, it remains strategically incomplete.

The events of the future will be driven

by data, empowered by technology, and built on emotional connection. AI-powered personalization, hybrid experiences, and sustainability are no longer optional—they have already become integral to the very definition of success.

How do you interpret the reasons why Türkiye is preferred in MICE tourism?

Explaining the demand for Türkiye solely through geographical advantages would be a great injustice to our country.

Yes, Türkiye is located at the crossroads of three continents. However, what truly differentiates us is our ability to transform logistical advantage into experiential strength. From my observations in the field, I can say this very clearly: those who choose Türkiye are not simply selecting a destination they are investing in a multi-layered experience ecosystem.

Within the same day, participants can attend a global congress and then enjoy a gastronomic experience in a historical venue in the evening.

Modern infrastructure seamlessly blends with thousands of years of cultural heritage and most importantly, people are at the heart of this experience.

Turkish hospitality is one of the most under-discussed yet most powerful competitive advantages of this sector. Hosting an event in Türkiye is not merely a technical operation it is also a process of building emotional connections.

How do you evaluate Türkiye's Events and MICE infrastructure compared to other countries?

Türkiye's MICE infrastructure is no longer "developing", it has reached a mature and competitive level. Cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Antalya, and Izmir are on par with the world's leading destinations in terms of congress centers, hotel capacity, and technical infrastructure. However, to be very clear, our differentiation does not lie in concrete and technology alone.

Our real strengths are speed, flexibility, and creativity which stand as three of the most critical pillars in

our industry.

In international projects, I frequently observe a key distinction: while processes in many countries are managed through procedures, in Türkiye they are managed through solutions. This is an invaluable advantage for global brands, as the events industry is inherently dynamic and requires real-time decision-making.

In addition, Türkiye's young, dynamic, and highly productive workforce contributes not only service, but also vision to the sector.

Could you tell us about TEODER?

What value does it bring to the industry?

TEODER was established at a critical turning point for Türkiye's events industry.

As Umut Kaya, President of TEODER, I can state this clearly: we did not simply establish an association we built an industry consciousness.

Our goal was to unify a fragmented structure, elevate standards, and represent Türkiye with a strong institutional identity on the global Events and MICE stage. Today, TEODER has evolved into a structure that represents the collective voice of the sector, sets standards, guides education and development, and builds international relationships. For us, the key principle has always been and continues to be that Türkiye's events industry will no longer grow through individual success stories, but through collective strength.

How did you manage to bring together such a broad and fragmented industry?

To be candid, this process was less about organizational success and more about a mindset transformation. For many years, the events industry operated within a structure where competition was high and collaboration was limited. We changed that equation. From the very beginning, our approach at TEODER has been

clear: "No one in this sector is a competitor; everyone is part of the same ecosystem." What has driven TEODER's growth is inclusivity, transparency, and trust. We did not impose something on the sector we built it together. Thanks to this approach, we achieved broad participation in a short time, and for the first time, the industry gained a unified voice.

What are TEODER's future vision and upcoming projects?

We do not define the future in three separate headings, but rather within a single framework: "Transforming Türkiye into a production hub for Events and MICE."

In this direction, we are deepening our work based on three main pillars, supported by numerous sub-initiatives: Digitalization and Data Economy. One of the biggest gaps in the sector is data. As TEODER, we aim to establish, for the first time in Türkiye, dedicated data infrastructures for the MICE industry. Because those who manage data, manage the industry. Sustainability and Green Events. Sustainability is no longer a choice—it is a necessity. We are developing standards and certification systems to position Türkiye as a leading country in this field. Human Resources and Education

The future of the industry will be built by today's youth. Through university collaborations, training programs, and career platforms, we are nurturing the next generation of professionals.

What role will TEODER play internationally?

Are there major projects on the horizon?

Absolutely. In fact, I can state this very clearly: Within the next five years,

Türkiye will become one of the key game-changing countries in the global MICE industry. As TEODER, our vision is clear: to position Türkiye not only as a country where events are hosted, but as a hub where events are designed, exported, and managed. In this context, we are actively working on numerous initiatives, including strategic partnerships with international MICE organizations, global summits to be hosted in Türkiye, and the international expansion of Turkish event brands. Platforms such as IMEX serve as showcases for this transformation. However, we do not want to remain in the showcase. As TEODER and the professionals of the events industry, we aim to be at the very center of the stage.



**Umut Kaya,
President of
TEODER and
Chairman of
Boss Event
Marketing
Agency**

TÜRKİYE SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH EUROPEAN TOUR OPERATORS

Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy met with senior executives from two of Europe's leading tourism operators to discuss 2026 targets and early booking trends.



The talks also focused on joint campaigns aimed at reducing the effects of regional conflicts and boosting cooperation. Ersoy held meetings in Antalya and Istanbul with Jet2 CEO Steve Heapy and Joachim Seip, Global Contracting Director of Germany's Dertour Group. The discussions reviewed current performance and outlined the roadmap for the coming period. In a post on social media Ersoy said at the meetings that cooperation in the German and U.K. markets, as well as Türkiye's 2026 tourism goals, were comprehensively evaluated. He added that campaigns with Jet2 and initiatives with Dertour in Germany and other markets were assessed, underlining Türkiye's determination to strengthen its position in both operators' portfolios. According to officials from the Tourism Ministry, the meetings examined early season data, booking dynamics and demand trends in Germany and the U.K. The impact of existing campaigns, budget planning for the new period, and market-specific actions were also discussed. Officials highlighted that Türkiye continues to hold a strong position in both operators'

portfolios and aims to advance this further through new partnerships and strategic steps. The officials noted that cooperation with Dertour Group, one of Europe's largest tourism companies, continues across a wide geography, covering Central and Eastern European markets with Germany at the forefront. The Group provides a significant flow of visitors to Türkiye, not only from Germany but also from markets such as Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Advertising campaigns and supply security measures, particularly in the German market, have

reinforced Türkiye's strong standing, said the officials. Germany is expected to play a decisive role in achieving the 2026 targets, with early-year sales showing signs of recovery. By March, bookings were rising again, and the outlook for the summer season was described as positive. Travel advisories issued by Germany against some rival destinations are also expected to benefit demand for Türkiye. Türkiye's tourism revenue reached \$65.2 billion in 2025, rising 6.8 percent from the previous year, and the target for 2026 has been set at \$68 billion.



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Türkiye's tourism income, foreign tourist arrivals increase in first quarter

Foreign tourist arrivals to Türkiye surged in the first quarter of the year, and revenues also rose to nearly \$10 billion despite the regional tensions, official data showed on Thursday.

In March alone, the number of foreign visitors arriving in Türkiye rose 5% year-over-year to 2.46 million people, while it rose 2.2% to 6.84 million people in the first quarter, data released by the Culture and Tourism Ministry revealed. March data contributed to the positive picture for the tourism sector, a significant source of income for the Turkish economy. Arrivals rebounded in March after a drop of around 2% in February and an annual rise of around 3.5% in January.

Combined with Turkish citizens living abroad, the number of visitors was around 9.22 million in the first quarter, marking an increase of 4.25% compared to the same period last year, when total visits stood at some 8.84 million.

The arrivals of Turkish nationals saw a surge of nearly 10.6% in the January-March period, reaching 2.38 million. The country's tourism revenues also rose 4.2% year-over-year in the first quarter of 2026 to nearly \$9.9 billion, approaching the threshold of \$10 billion.

Presenting the data at a news conference in Istanbul, Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri

Ersoy emphasized the importance of how crisis periods are managed, underscoring positive performance and pointing to Türkiye being "an island of stability in its region."

"The figures clearly demonstrate not only that Türkiye is a strong destination in tourism but also that it has a high capacity for crisis management," Ersoy said. "Crises may always occur in our region, and they will, but what is crucial is how such periods are managed. Last year, we faced similar global developments and regional uncertainties. Despite this, thankfully, we closed 2025 with 64 million visitors and \$65.2 billion in tourism income," he noted. Explaining that the effects of Ramadan and the U.S.-Israel-Iran war were felt in February and March tourism figures, the minister noted that despite this, the number of visitors in March still rose. "If there had been no effects of the war, we would have seen strong double-digit growth in March," he furthered.

Ersoy also informed that the top countries in terms of total number of visitors in the first quarter were

Germany with 678,000 visitors, followed by Russia with 651,000, Bulgaria with 539,000, Iran with 527,000, and the United Kingdom with 314,000 visitors. However, he suggested that they foresee a different picture when looking ahead, pointing out that the war effects could be felt more in the second quarter. "We can see that a difficult second quarter lies ahead, during which the negative effects of the war will be deeply felt," Ersoy said.

He also said that a lasting cease-fire in the region is key for tourism recovery, adding that last-minute bookings will be prominent during this period.

"Uncertainty during the conflict ... points to a period in which last-minute bookings will be prevalent in tourist travel," he said. "If a permanent cease-fire is established, we anticipate a rapid recovery".

In 2025, revenues increased by 6.8% from the previous year to a record high of \$65.2 billion, according to official data. The government targets \$68 billion in tourism revenues this year, according to an economic program announced last year.



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LEVNI HOTELS STANDS OUT IN MICE TOURISM WITH ITS CITY HOTEL MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

Levni Hotel & SPA and Levni Istanbul Hotel Handwritten Collection by Accor are preparing to carry Istanbul's boutique luxury and experience-oriented accommodation approach to the global market ahead of IMEX Frankfurt 2026, one of the most important meetings of the international tourism and MICE world.



Levni Hotels General Manager Hatice Özcan

Providing information about the MICE tourism capacity of Levni Hotel & SPA and Levni Istanbul Hotel Handwritten Collection by Accor, Levni Hotels General Manager Hatice Özcan said, "Both hotels, located in the heart of the historical peninsula, combine Istanbul's cultural texture with a modern understanding of comfort; they draw attention especially with the privileged experience they offer for boutique meetings, incentive groups, corporate accommodations and private events.

Operating under the umbrella of Handwritten Collection, one of Accor's distinguished brands, Levni Istanbul Hotel Handwritten Collection by Accor offers international guests an original accommodation experience that brings together Istanbul's cultural texture with modern comfort, with its personalized service approach and characteristic design. Blending the historical atmosphere of the region



with modern city hotel management, the hotel responds strongly especially to culture- and experience-oriented travel trends.

On the other hand, Levni Hotel & SPA stands out in the MICE sector with its wellness, SPA and upper-segment city hotel management concept. The hotel management, drawing attention to the fact that meeting experiences in today's business world should not only be business-oriented but also integrated with wellness, comfort and city experience, aims to focus especially on boutique meeting groups and incentive organizations during the IMEX process. Located in the historical and cultural center of the city, Levni Hotels offers its guests not only accommodation but also the opportunity to experience Istanbul," she said.

Stating that, in the meetings to be held within the scope of IMEX Frankfurt 2026, it is aimed for Levni Hotels to develop its collaborations primarily in the European market, as well as in North America, South America, the Gulf countries and the CIS geography, Özcan said, "The brand plans to focus especially on international event organizers, corporate agencies and new partnerships in the premium travel segment. With its approach that places guest experience at the

center, its architecture combining historical atmosphere with modern comfort, and its personalized service approach, Levni Hotels is preparing to represent Istanbul's new-generation city hotel management vision on the international platform," she said. Hatice Özcan also provided information about the services offered to guests by Levni Hotel & Spa and Levni Istanbul Hotel Handwritten Collection, saying, "We offer our guests not only accommodation but also a strong meeting and event experience. Our hotels, located in

Sirkeci, in the center of the Historical Peninsula, respond to an important need in the region with their modern meeting rooms, integrated operational structure and boutique service approach.

Especially the fact that Levni Istanbul Hotel Handwritten Collection is Accor's first Handwritten Collection brand in Turkey is a separate source of pride for us. Guests want to feel the spirit of the destination where they hold meetings and experience the story of the city they are in. As Levni Hotels, we create a difference exactly at this point."





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The guests coming to Istanbul do not only attend to the meetings. They have the opportunity of seeing one of the most beautiful cities in World: Istanbul. **EYÜP PEHLİVAN- IRVIN MANDEL / HÜMANITAS MICE**

All or most of you might think the reason why you should have a meeting in Turkey and in Istanbul. First of all your questions must be answered so that you can organize your meeting in Turkey. I want to answer your question with another one: Why don't you? What do we need to have a meeting? Initially an adequate congress center or hotels with enough meeting rooms with enough capacity. Istanbul is a city that is able to satisfy these needs with 3 big congress centers and dozens of hotels. Istanbul already hosted hundreds of congresses and hosted the guests with no problem. Istanbul is also adequate with the total bed amount.

In Istanbul there are technical companies serving with the technical infrastructure in the level of the world standards. All kinds of technical tools exist for sound and display. Since there is experienced service and technical staff as well, there is nothing to worry about that. All vehicles and infrastructure is suitable for transfers and inner-city transportation. Subway line is spread in major part of the city. Especially to arrive to the airport and centrum is very easy and fast. There are direct flights to Istanbul from cities of Europe and world. The guests coming to Istanbul do not only attend to the meetings. They have the opportunity of seeing one of the most beautiful cities in World:

Istanbul. Istanbul is not a city of just history and culture. This magnificent city keeps glamourising its guests with its rich cuisine that contents of local and world restaurants along with its natural beauty, peerless view and historical texture. Guests as long as they create time, can also visit touristic highlights of the country such as Cappadocia, Ephesus, Bodrum, Hierapolis(Pamukkale), Antalya. The meeting can be held also in Antalya, the paradise on earth, famous city for its resorts and is assertive about congress tourism as well. Antalya has the needed infrastructure just like Istanbul. I also want to underline that comparing to European centers, Turkey will be more economic alternative for all kinds of events. "Ok with all these but what about security?" you are saying, right? You might be right but the security problems occurring ime to time in Turkey are not exclusive to Turkey. You can ask the same question for any center in any world. But I can be very clear about that: in Istanbul, in Turkey, you are as safe as you are in any country or in any European city.





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HOW TÜRKİYE CONTINUES TO RANK AMONG THE **WORLD'S TOP TOURIST DESTINATIONS**

Türkiye continues to solidify its status as one of the world's leading tourism destinations, welcoming 64 million visitors and generating \$65.2 billion in tourism revenue in 2025. Both figures marked year-on-year growth, underscoring the sector's resilience despite ongoing geopolitical challenges in the region.

According to Erkan Yağcı, head of the Turkish Hoteliers Federation (TUOFED), Türkiye has emerged as "a truly powerful tourism country," with tourist arrivals increasing by 3% and tourism revenue rising by 7% compared to the previous year. These results placed Türkiye as the fourth-most-visited country globally, based on data from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Yağcı emphasized that the tourism sector has demonstrated a strong ability to withstand crises, attributing its success to sustained efforts across the industry. He noted optimism for continued growth, highlighting expectations that future figures will surpass previous records in both visitor numbers and revenue.

A key strategic priority for Türkiye's tourism industry is to diversify travel across all seasons and regions. The goal is to move beyond a summer-centric model by encouraging year-round tourism, including winter and off-season travel. Initiatives focusing on sports tourism, conference tourism, and international events are central to this approach.

Conference tourism, in particular, plays an important role during the winter



and spring months. Antalya, a major resort city in southwestern Türkiye, has become a focal point for such activities, hosting numerous national and international gatherings each year. The city is set to welcome several high-profile global events, including major diplomatic, scientific, and environmental conferences. Yağcı highlighted the significance of Antalya hosting internationally recognized events, describing it as further proof of the city's global

standing. With one of the highest tourist capacities worldwide, Antalya remains a cornerstone of Türkiye's tourism ecosystem and a symbol of the country's broader ambitions to expand and balance tourism growth nationwide.

Overall, Türkiye's tourism performance reflects a combination of strong infrastructure, strategic planning, and adaptability-positioning the country for sustained success in the global travel industry.

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IŞIL ÖZMEN: TÜRKİYE HAS STRONG POTENTIAL IN MICE TOURISM

Success in the MICE sector is not measured only by the number or size of events. For us, networking is not merely about exchanging business cards; it is a process that gives rise to real collaborations and aims to establish sustainable relationships.



Işıl Özmen, President of the International MICE Industry Association (I-MICE)

Işıl Özmen, President of the International MICE Industry Association (I-MICE), which has contributed to the development of the sector for more than ten years and brings together agencies and suppliers, said that success in the MICE sector cannot be measured only by the number or size of events. In her interview with Turizm Aktüel, Özmen listed Turkey's pros and cons in MICE tourism as a destination and made statements about the future of MICE tourism.

Could you give information about

the International I-MICE Industry Association?

The International MICE Industry Association (I-MICE) is a strong non-governmental organization established in Türkiye that has contributed to the development of the sector for more than ten years and brings agencies and suppliers together. Our founding purpose is to strengthen the culture of cooperation in the MICE sector, to create benefits for sector professionals at national and international level, and to inspire new-generation professionals.

Over the past ten years, we have built a culture of solidarity woven with sectoral training programs, social responsibility projects, networking events, fam trips and sectoral contacts requiring intensive effort during difficult periods. Thanks to our approach that does not avoid taking responsibility, I-MICE has assumed a guiding role in the sector.

What do you think are the success criteria in the MICE sector?

Success in the MICE sector is not measured only by the number or size of events. For us, networking is not

merely about exchanging business cards; it is a process that gives rise to real collaborations and aims to establish sustainable relationships. Thanks to the strong communication network, B2B events and academic collaborations we have developed as I-MICE, our members not only meet each other, but also add concrete value to the sector by producing joint projects.

In addition, the strategic lobbying and intellectual capital model that can increase Istanbul's congress winning rate from 30% to 50% shows that the success criterion is not only physical infrastructure, but also academic networks, relationships established with scientific communities and the production of common wisdom.

What are the reasons for preference of guests who prefer Turkey in the field of MICE tourism?

Turkey is an attractive destination for MICE tourism with its geographical location, cultural diversity and strong infrastructure. Many cities, especially Istanbul, stand out with international congress centers, hotels and ease of transportation. Guests see Turkey's unique historical and cultural experiences, hospitality and competitive cost advantages among their reasons for preference.

In addition, especially the high value-added economic impact created by Istanbul in congress tourism is a factor that strengthens guests' preferences. The spending capacity of congress delegates, approximately 4,000 dollars per person, creates a multiplier effect that feeds not only hotels but also the gastronomy, transportation, retail and culture-arts ecosystem.

This makes Turkey not only an event destination, but also a strategic center that contributes directly to the regional economy.

How do you evaluate Türkiye's MICE tourism? What are our advantages?

Türkiye has quite strong potential in terms of MICE tourism. Among our advantages, first of all, comes our

strategic geographical location. Being a bridge between Europe and Asia creates a natural center of attraction for international organizations. In addition, our strong hotel and congress infrastructure, our rich cultural and touristic diversity, our hospitality culture and our experienced human resources in the field are the most important advantages of our sector.

Could you talk about the projects I-MICE plans to carry out in the future?

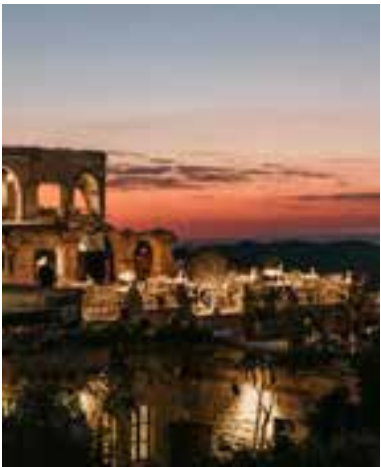
In the coming period, as I-MICE, we are planning multi-faceted projects that will contribute to the sector. First of all, we aim to support the

development of our members with sectoral meetings, training programs and new collaborations. Internship and mentorship projects for bringing students into the sector will continue to be one of our priority agenda items. Digitalization and artificial intelligence integration are also on our agenda. Especially regarding legal regulations and certification processes in the sectoral use of artificial intelligence, we have included informative training meetings on our agenda, as we previously did for KVKK. In this way, we aim to prepare our members not only for technological transformation, but also for legal and ethical dimensions.



Işıl Özmen, President of the International MICE Industry Association (I-MICE)





Museum Hotel; A unique cave hotel with a unique living-museum concept

Situated in a very special geographic region in Cappadocia, Museum Hotel has been designed and created from a distinctive combination of the land and historical features and ruins, some intact and some beautifully restored to their original glory. The hotel features 34 rooms & suites—each of them

exceptional in their own inimitable way. No room can be alike, with each bringing its own special ambiance, contributing to Museum Hotel's evident character and charm. Steeped in thousands of years of history, there is a magical feel to the hotel. Our unusual 'living museum' concept means our cave rooms and specially restored

traditional rooms are all decorated with priceless antiques and feature stunning views of Cappadocia—just some of the elements that go to make Museum Hotel... well, unique! As evidence of this, Museum Hotel is the only hotel in Türkiye invited into the family of luxury hotels and special dining establishments that comprise Relais & Châteaux.



ITF IS STRONGER THIS YEAR WITH ITS INTERNATIONAL PURCHASING PROGRAM

Istanbul Tourism Fair (ITF), one of the most important meetings of the Turkish tourism sector, is preparing to open its doors in its fourth year at the Yenikapı Eurasia Show and Art Center on September 24-25, 2026, further increasing its impact on an international scale.

Positioned with the aim of increasing Türkiye's global competitiveness in tourism, ITF is being implemented with a strong cooperation structure in which Türkiye İş Bankası undertakes the main sponsorship and Turkish Airlines carries out the official airline sponsorship. The organization is further strengthened through the strategic partnership of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies, the official business partnership of the Turkish Hoteliers Association and the Turkish Tourism Investors Association, and with the support of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Ministry of Trade and the Istanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Bringing together all key stakeholders of the Turkish tourism sector around the goal of global leadership, ITF, in its fourth year, will host agencies and tour operators in Istanbul that spend on tourism in Turkey and want to develop new cooperation, with its international purchasing program.

THE BUYERS WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE FAIR WERE DETERMINED METICULOUSLY

Dream Project Board Member and CEO Volkan Ataman stated in



**Dream Project Board Member and CEO
Volkan Ataman**

his statement that, as a result of a comprehensive survey conducted with a total of 10 thousand tourism professionals from tour operators, outgoing agencies, online platforms, DMC, MICE and travel agencies from 150 countries, the buyers who will participate in the fair were determined meticulously. Strong agencies and tour operators

focused on Turkey in America, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and Dagestan, Chechnya, Tatarstan affiliated with the Russian Federation; in the European market, England, Germany, France, Italy, Belarus, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania and North Macedonia; in the Eastern market, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, Egypt and Qatar; and in the Asian market, Singapore, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Thailand and Bangladesh were included in the fair.

THE GIANTS OF TOURISM MEET IN B2B MEETINGS

Within the scope of the hosted buyer program, B2B meetings will be held between stand-owning participants and the purchasing delegation on September 24-25. Thanks to the professional appointment system, meetings planned in advance will bring participants together with the right buyers through country- and category-based matching and will form the basis of new collaborations.



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Istanbul Lutfi Kırdar International Convention and Exhibition Center General Manager Deniz Dikkaya

Deniz Dikkaya: Türkiye's congress tourist spends 3 times more money

The focus of competition in tourism is changing. Now, rather than the number of visitors, the income left per tourist and economic added value stand out. Congress and event tourism (MICE), which manages a volume of 3-4 trillion dollars on a global scale, creates a high-income economy that feeds many sectors at the same time, from hotels to airlines. Istanbul Lutfi Kırdar International Convention and Exhibition Center General Manager Deniz Dikkaya, stating that the congress tourist spends 3-4 times more compared to the classical tourist, said, "Congress tourism provides high added value to the city economy." While the balances in the global tourism sector are changing, the competitive power of countries is now measured not only by the number of tourists they host, but by the income they obtain per visitor. In this transformation, the MICE sector, which covers congress, fair and event tourism, stands out with its high spending potential, multi-sector economic impact and structure spread throughout the year. The sector, which manages a volume of 3 to 4 trillion dollars in the world, feeds a wide economic chain from hotels to airlines, from restaurants to logistics and the service sector, while Türkiye is also shown among the countries with the highest growth potential in this field. Especially Istanbul, with its transportation network, accommodation capacity and organization infrastructure, stands out among the destinations that can take a larger share in international congress tourism. Stating that congress and event tourism creates a trillion-dollar economy on a global scale, Deniz Dikkaya expressed

that the sector feeds dozens of different areas at the same time and said, "Congress and event tourism is a very large ecosystem that feeds approximately 50 to 100 different sub-sectors, from hotels to restaurants, from the aviation sector to transportation networks, from guidance services to food and supply companies. We are talking about a market that manages a volume of 3-4 trillion dollars in the world."

CONGRESS TOURIST SPENDS 4 TIMES MORE COMPARED TO NORMAL TOURIST

Stating that one of the most important reasons for the economic impact of congress tourism is the visitor profile that appeals to the high-income group, Dikkaya said that the difference in per capita spending is at a remarkable level, saying, "While a normal tourist spends on average around 1000 dollars in a period of approximately 10 days in Türkiye, the congress tourist can increase this figure up to 4000 dollars. A very wide economic mobility is formed from hotels to restaurants, from airlines to the event sector."

TÜRKİYE OBTAINED 13 BILLION DOLLARS OF INCOME IN 2025

Stating that Türkiye obtained approximately 65 billion dollars of tourism income in 2025, Deniz Dikkaya explained that approximately 20 percent of this figure came from MICE tourism. Dikkaya said, "Throughout 2025, approximately 13 billion dollars of income was obtained from congress and event tourism. This area not only increases tourism income, but also raises the quality of tourism income."

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SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES OF COUNTRIES IN THE MICE INDUSTRY

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ECE DELEN

However there were difficult times when we practiced these.

What was the difficult part? The destination's insufficient facilities.

The we learned to ask that question in time: Is it possible to have MICE tourism?

IT IS NOT

Why? If your organization is just incentive organization, first you might say you can realize in any country. Because in incentive tours the goal is to try the cuisine of that country, to get to know the culture, to learn the history and to see the geography. But even in this there might be some problems. In general in that country there might not be the vehicle that you will use for MICE groups. The newest car might be a 2000 model, or the most suggestible facility might have only 4 stars. Restaurants might be very good but the service might not. When you take



all of these little things you participants are left unsatisfied and unhappy. Their unhappiness will put you in a very bad position in front of 3rd persons and then you face with "why didn't you warn us then" questions. In particularly organized international meetings, congresses, symposiums, team work meetings this lack of technical support might make you think

of a different destination: hotel with a small accommodation capacity, lack of rooms big enough to host the organization, technologically insufficient systems in the country, not having enough qualified staff. When serving to MICE tourism we practice one of the most difficult jobs in the world. Each profession practices one or maximum 3 major components in their jobs, in our job we have to practice much more different components in order to

obtain customer satisfaction. We have the organize the flight that will take the guest while arriving to our country and the menus of the 3 meals she/ he will get during the tour. Destination is the foundation of the event to-be-constructed. You chose your destination even before you chose your partner and you experience as much as your destinations contribution to your goal.

At this point Turkey is a destination that serves to the MICE sector. It certainly should be utilized. One of the biggest reasons of this, as known, is the importance of hosting a guest, serving the service and giving importance to luxury that originates back in the Ottoman Imperial period. It still has its place in our modern culture. Besides that there is Turkish Airlines, the company with the most direct flights, there are the newest cars in the country, high technology is utilized in the events, there is attention in high levels on security. With all these you can comfortably have MICE events in Turkey. Do not forget: destination is the foundation of the event.



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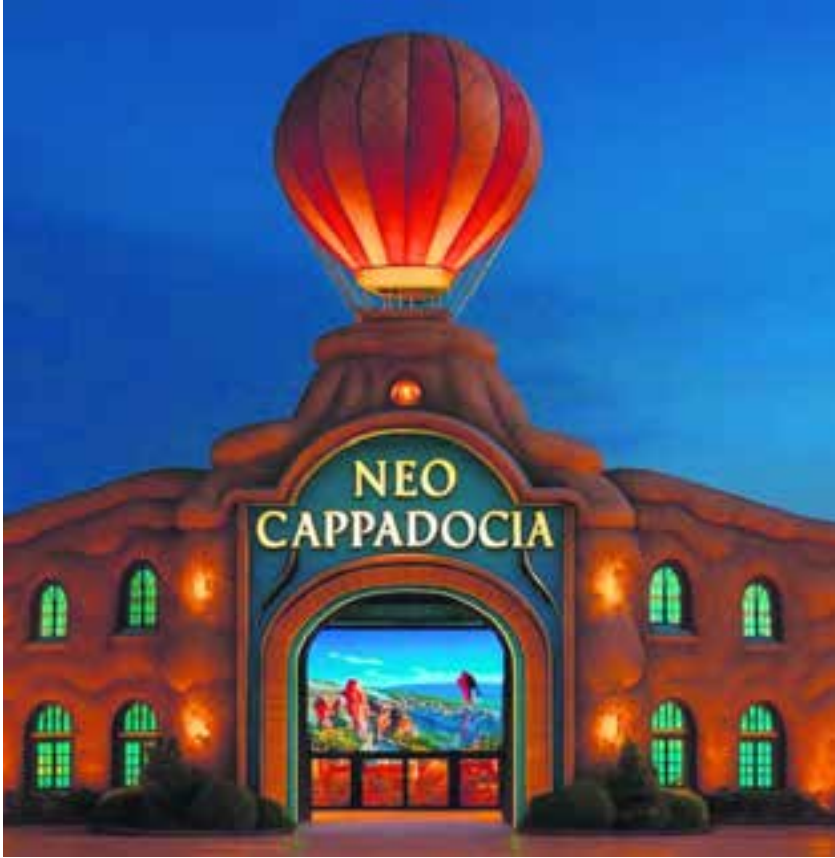
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\$20M INVESTMENT IN CAPPADOCIA

DOF Robotics, which already exports 90% of its production to over 60 countries, is aiming to establish Türkiye as the global manufacturing center for entertainment technology. The company's reach is highlighted by the fact that more than a third of its products are destined for the North American market.



Mustafa Mertcan, chair of the board at DOF Robotics

Renowned for its story-driven simulators in the entertainment sector, DOF Robotics is on a mission to position Türkiye as a global hub for both production and innovation in entertainment technology. "Today, we export 90% of our production to over 60 countries across 6 continents, with more than 35% of our products going to the North American market alone," Mustafa Mertcan, chair of the board at DOF Robotics, said.

One of the cornerstones of the new strategy is NeoCappadocia, a project Mertcan describes as special both strategically and personally. "Cappadocia is one of the world's few natural wonders, attracting millions of international tourists annually; however, the average overnight stay is only 1.4 days. This figure does not align with the region's potential," he noted.

The current experience is quite narrow: balloon tours, horseback riding and ceramic workshops, he added. To address this "serious experience gap," DOF Robotics is investing approximately \$20 million to build a holistic experience center in Avanos. "We have purchased the land; we will not be renting. We aim to open our doors within approximately 1.5 years, expecting over 500,000 visitors in the first stage," Mertcan said.

The project will feature three core attractions: a hot air balloon flight simulation for those unable to take a real flight, a "Flying Theater" offering a virtual aerial tour of Türkiye, and a unique show combining live actors with a massive 26-meter digital screen, which "intertwines visual and performing arts." The project will also include a

hotel, with the ultimate goal of doubling the average visitor stay and transforming Cappadocia into a year-round destination, Mertcan noted. "NeoCappadocia is the first step of the Neo Planet brand, but our vision is much broader," he said. "We have established a 16-meter-long, 40-person flying theater in Mexico," Baydaliev said.

Stating that the Cappadocia project has been a long-held dream and that they will carry out 10,000 square meters of construction, Baydaliev added that the investment will be completed in 2027. "We will attract more tourists by establishing an entertainment center. We also plan to build an 80-room hotel. With our Neo Planet brand, our goal is to become the third-largest player in Europe over the next 10-20 years," he noted.



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METE VARDAR: TÜRKİYE MAINTAINS ITS POSITION AS A STRONG DESTINATION IN TOURISM

Jolly Chairman of the Board Mete Vardar made evaluations regarding increasing costs in the tourism sector, season expectations and support mechanisms.

Jolly Chairman of the Board Mete Vardar stated that Türkiye maintains its strong position in international tourism, and expressed that steps that will support the sustainable growth of the sector, especially in the face of increasing operational costs, are important. For these steps, he thanked the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, especially President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, for their contributions to tourism.



Jolly Chairman of the Board Mete Vardar

THE SECTOR STARTED THE SEASON CAUTIOUSLY BUT HOPEFULLY

Saying that they have recently come together with tourism stakeholders in different regions, Vardar stated that the sector started the season cautiously but hopefully. Emphasizing that the increase especially in energy, personnel and operational expenses creates serious pressure on the sector, Vardar underlined that the tourism sector has a strategic role in terms of the Turkish economy and employment.

TURKEY MAINTAINS ITS POSITION AS A STRONG DESTINATION

Stating that Türkiye continues to be a strong destination on a global scale thanks to its natural beauties, cultural heritage and high service quality, Vardar expressed that the Mediterranean and Aegean regions maintain their importance in the international market.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE SECTOR

Saying that the regulations regarding the accommodation

tax and the announced credit support package were welcomed positively by the sector, Vardar stated that additional supports could contribute to the sector in the current process. Vardar said, "The tourism sector is one of Turkey's most important areas not only economically, but also in terms of employment. Especially in order for facilities operating during certain periods of the year to continue their operations, temporary support mechanisms are becoming important. Regulations that can be made on VAT and personnel supports will ease the sector's cost burden while also contributing to a more balanced process management."

SPREADING TOURISM OVER 12 MONTHS IS CRITICAL

Drawing attention also to the importance of spreading tourism over 12 months, Vardar stated that sustainable support models are important especially in order for facilities to remain open during the winter period and for employment to be protected. Stating that Turkey's competitiveness will increase even further with the development of alternative tourism areas, Vardar drew attention to the sector's long-term growth potential.



TIME TO
DISCOVER



Istanbul holds vast untapped potential in congress tourism

Türkiye's congress tourism activity is concentrated largely in Istanbul and Antalya, but Istanbul's potential is far greater than its current performance, according to Hasan Eker, vice president of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB).



Eker said that research shows Istanbul has the capacity to rank fifth in the world for congress tourism. "Right now, Istanbul ranks 20th. Yet in terms of potential and infrastructure, it is actually in the top five globally," he said. He explained that this potential stems from the city's extensive meeting facilities, accommodation capacity, transportation network and rich social programs. Eker emphasized that despite this strong foundation, Istanbul captures far less market

share than it could. "If Istanbul rises to the fifth place it deserves, the city could generate around \$10 billion in additional revenue," he noted. He also highlighted Antalya's strong position in the sector, supported by its all-inclusive hotels and large conference halls. Congress tourism brings significant economic value to the cities that host such events, Eker said. In line with Türkiye's goal of extending tourism across all 12 months and all 81 provinces, he pointed out that cities

such as Mardin, Diyarbakır, Rize and Nevşehir also have the capacity to host congresses. Eker stated that congress tourism performed well in 2025 compared with previous years, adding that 2011 remains Türkiye's best year in this segment and that efforts continue to return to that level. Underscoring the high added value of the sector, Eker said: "In congress tourism, per-capita tourism income can reach \$3,000. It is also a type of tourism that fills our low-season periods."

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TRAVEL SHOP SIGNS A GIANT COOPERATION AGREEMENT IN CRUISE TOURISM

Under the leadership of TravelShop Booking Chairman of the Board Murtaza Kalender, an important cooperation agreement that will add value to Turkish tourism was signed. Within the scope of the agreement made with Orancon Group CEO and Board Member of the Greek Tourism Enterprises Federation Stratis Eleftheriou, a strong partnership was established in the field of cruise tourism.

In line with this strategic cooperation, it is aimed to bring 25 thousand tourists to Türkiye with cruise ships that will come from many countries of the world as of 2027. Thanks to TravelShop Booking's international vision and strong network in the sector, important destinations such as Istanbul, Izmir, Kuşadası, Bodrum, Marmaris and Antalya in particular will be promoted on a global scale; upper-segment tourists with high spending potential will be brought to Türkiye.

2027 TARGET: 25 THOUSAND CRUISE TOURISTS

Global tourism move from TravelShop

Booking; 2027 target 25 thousand cruise tourists

Murtaza Kalender, who stands out with his innovative approach and



Murtaza Kalender, Stratis Eleftheriou

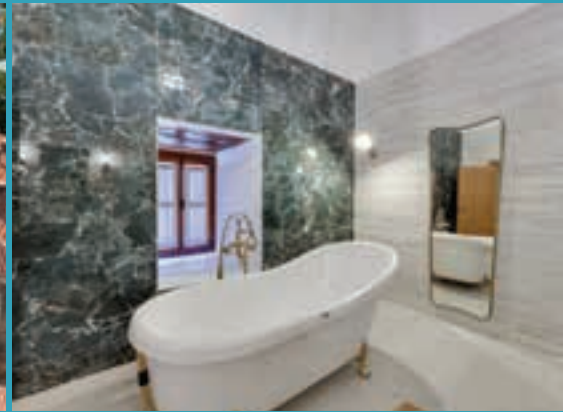
leadership in the tourism sector, will lead Türkiye to reach a stronger position in cruise tourism with this agreement. TravelShop Booking's international collaborations and broad organizational capability aim to carry Türkiye to higher ranks in the global tourism arena. Kalender aims to bring 25 thousand tourists to Turkey with this agreement.

The cooperation agreement in question was signed at TravelShop Booking's head office in Istanbul. TravelShop Booking continues to strengthen its active role in global tourism every passing day and to contribute to the promotion of Türkiye and the increase of tourism revenues.

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The winners of the **Starway** World Best Hotels Awards have been announced

Coral Travel announced the winners of the annual “Starway World Best Hotels” awards. Based on the results of the customer satisfaction survey, three hotels from Turkey took the top three spots in the ranking. In the category of the 100 best hotels in the world, Gloria Serenity Resort took first place, followed by Maxx Royal Kemer Resort in second place, while Blue Waters Club took third place.

The Coral Travel Starway World Best Hotels 2025 award ceremony took place on March 3 at the Axica Conference Center in Berlin. Hotels from around the world that ranked high in customer satisfaction surveys were honored in four categories.

The ceremony was attended by Ms. Gloria Guevara, President and CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), and Mr. Sören Hartmann, President of the German Tourism Industry Association (BTW), shared their views on the future of the tourism industry.

Guevara emphasized that the Coral Travel Starway World Best Hotels Awards honor not only excellence, but also leadership, highlighting the global impact of the industry. In her speech, she said:

“The travel and tourism industry

contributes \$11.7 trillion to the global economy and provides employment for 371 million people worldwide. As demand increases, so does our responsibility. We need to invest in human resources, make sustainability the standard practice, and use technology to improve both efficiency and the visitor experience.” He added that the leadership demonstrated by this year’s award-winning hotels contributes to upgrading standards throughout the global tourism ecosystem.

Hartmann emphasized that economic and geopolitical developments in German-speaking markets, combined with the impact of digitalization on travel habits, are transforming the region and creating new opportunities for the industry.

Koray Çavdır, Vice President of Coral Travel Group for Central Europe

(Germany, Austria, Switzerland), emphasized that digital transformation is a strategic priority for the group. “From artificial intelligence applications to robotic solutions and end-to-end process automation, our IT teams are implementing significant initiatives in many areas. We expect to see the full impact of these investments over the next two years,” Çavdır said. Also note that ODEON Tours’ 22 offices in Turkey and abroad are certified by Bureau Veritas, reflecting the company’s strong commitment to international quality standards. Regarding performance in the DACH region, Çavdır noted that passenger numbers have increased by more than 70% over the past two years, with Central Europe continuing to be one of the company’s key strategic development markets. At the ceremony, Ayhan Bektaş,



Koray Çavdır, Vice President of Coral Travel Group for Central Europe

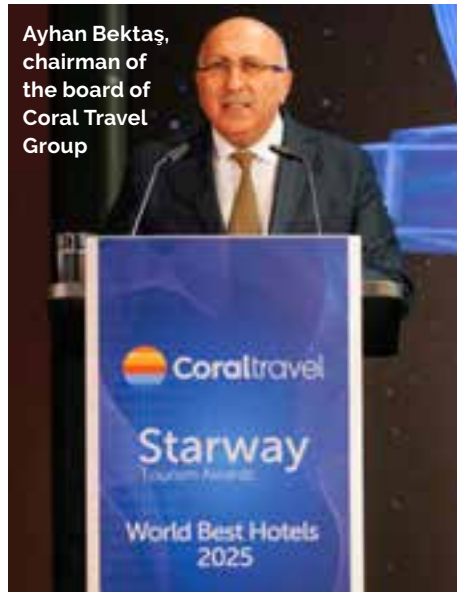
chairman of the board of Coral Travel Group, said that since its founding in 1992, the group has served over 39 million visitors. "From tour organization to accommodation, from destination services to air transportation, and from IT to security, we operate with a comprehensive structure that covers all the main sectors of the tourism industry. Today, in 21 countries, with 37 companies and over 6,000 employees, we serve approximately 3.81 million tourists annually," Bektaş said.

AWARDS IN FOUR CATEGORIES

After the speeches, the "Coral Travel Starway World Best Hotels 2025" awards were presented. The customer satisfaction data from 6,611 hotels in 25 destinations were subjected to a comprehensive statistical analysis. Based on the results, awards were given to the 100 hotels with the highest satisfaction rates, as well as to the 25 best hotels in the "Friendly to Children and Families" category, the 20 best hotels in the "Environmentally Friendly" category, and the 10 best hotels in the "Adults Only" category.

In the category of the 100 best hotels in the world, the top three hotels were

Ayhan Bektaş,
chairman of
the board of
Coral Travel
Group



all from Turkey. Gloria Serenity Resort took first place, Maxx Royal Kemer Resort took second, and Blue Waters Club took third.

Of the hotels included in the ranking of the 100 best, 56 were from Turkey, 14 from Egypt, 10 from Greece, 6 from Spain, 6 from the United Arab Emirates, 3 from Thailand, 2 from Tunisia, 2 from the Maldives, and 1 from Vietnam.

In the "Child and Family Friendly Hotels" category, awarded to accommodations with the best activities for children and families, Blue Waters Club took first place.

Picakalbatros White Beach in Egypt took second place, while Maxx Royal Belek Golf Resort secured third place. In the "Environmentally Friendly Hotels" category, which recognizes hotels that make significant efforts to protect nature through sustainable spaces and practices, Maxx Royal Kemer Resort took first place. Gloria Serenity Resort took second place and Akra Kemer took third.

In the "Adults-only hotels" category, which was recently introduced, 10 properties were recognized this year. The Rixos Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt took first place, the Trendy Palm Beach in Turkey took second place, and the Balmy Beach Resort Kemer, also in Turkey, took third place.

SERVING 3.81 MILLION TOURISTS BY 2025

Last year, Coral Travel Group served over 1.7 million visitors in Turkey and reached 2.4 million tourists throughout Europe, reaching a total of over 3.81 million visitors worldwide and continuing its strong growth. With operations in 90 destinations across 40 countries, the Coral Travel Group aims to increase the number of tourists it serves by 11% by 2026, exceeding 4.23 million.

2 hotels from Türkiye make **TIME's** 2026 'Greatest Places to Stay' list

Türkiye has secured a place on the global luxury travel map as two of its hotels were selected for the 2026 "Greatest Places to Stay" list published by TIME, with both properties standing out in Europe's limited selection.

The list, released as part of the magazine's broader "World's Greatest Places" selection, highlights destinations shaping global travel trends. This year, Türkiye is represented by two distinct concepts in two different regions: Aliée Istanbul and Avantgarde Refined Caves of Cappadocia.

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE MEETS MODERN LUXURY ON ISTANBUL'S WATERFRONT

In Istanbul, the spotlight falls on Aliée Istanbul, located along the Golden Horn in the redeveloped Tersane Istanbul area, a historic shipyard that



Zeynep Tamince,
Board Member of
Aliée Istanbul

had remained closed to the public for over a century before its transformation into a cultural and tourism hub. TIME frames the hotel as a striking example of urban renewal, describing it as a contemporary contrast within a city largely shaped by its past. The property blends Ottoman-era stone walls with expansive glass-covered courtyards, offering what is presented as both a hotel stay and an immersive historical setting. The experience is further shaped by its connection to the water, as guests can reach the property by private boats and take part in rowing sessions on the Golden Horn guided by world champion instructors. Alongside these features, the hotel includes a large wellness center exceeding 4,000 square meters and multiple restaurants built around a gastronomy-focused concept, reinforcing its positioning within the global luxury segment.

CAVE ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURAL REVIVAL DEFINE CAPPADOCIA ENTRY

In central Türkiye, the Cappadocia-based Avantgarde Refined Caves of Cappadocia offers a different approach, one rooted in the region's volcanic landscape and historical layers. Designed by architect Efe Aydar, the hotel follows a philosophy described as working in harmony with nature, shaping spaces by following the natural form of the rock rather than altering it. Traditional carving techniques known as "kulunk" craftsmanship are used to form the interiors, preserving the organic texture of the caves. TIME draws attention to the property's quiet and refined atmosphere, noting that some suites are set within a 19th-century residence



Ismet Oztanik,
founder of
Avantgarde
Refined Caves of
Cappadocia



carved from soft volcanic tuff and once used by a priest from the nearby Saint Georgios Church, reflecting the area's Christian and Byzantine heritage. The interiors use curved lighting elements to highlight the natural stone surfaces, while guests are offered access to local vineyards, a cave spa covering 1,800 square meters with traditional Turkish baths, and a broader cultural setting. The hotel, located in Urgup and consisting of 46 rooms, is also structured as a cultural hub, with plans for the upcoming Creatopia Art and Culture Center, which is expected to host activities ranging from sculpture exhibitions to artist residencies and live performances.



KAYAKAPI

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SECTOR REPS PROJECT 5-8 PCT GROWTH FOR 2026 TOURISM SEASON

After breaking records in 2025, Türkiye's tourism sector is gearing up for another strong year in 2026, with industry experts projecting a 5-8 percent increase in visitor numbers and revenue.



In 2025, Türkiye welcomed 63.9 million international tourists, ranking fourth globally, while tourism revenue reached \$65.2 billion, securing the country in seventh place worldwide. Antalya, the country's tourism hub, recorded 17.57 million visitors, making it the eighth most-visited city globally and earning the fifth spot among the world's top destinations. The southern resort city also generated over \$17 billion in tourism revenue, reinforcing its position as a significant driver of the national economy.

Ercan Çek, vice president of a hotel managers association, expressed

optimism for the 2026 summer season. "Following the record-breaking year of 2019, 2025 was another landmark for Turkish and Antalya tourism. With 64 million tourists and \$65 billion in revenue, it was truly a record year," Çek said. He noted that despite cost pressures and currency fluctuations, Türkiye maintained its strong global rankings, signaling a resilient tourism sector. Looking ahead, Çek highlighted varied prospects across key markets. "European arrivals are stable, likely matching last year's figures. The domestic market remains a reliable driver, especially in challenging times.

Notably, Russia is performing well despite the ongoing Ukraine conflict, supported by a relatively strong ruble," he explained.

"Other source markets in the Middle East and Asia are showing encouraging early signs," he added.

Çek stressed that geopolitical and regional stability will be critical for maintaining growth. "If current conditions persist, we anticipate 5-8 percent growth in both tourist numbers and revenues across Antalya and Türkiye this summer," he concluded, emphasizing cautious optimism amid global uncertainties.

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TÜRKİYE TOPS CHARTS AS GERMANS' FAVORITE SUMMER DESTINATION IN 2026

Türkiye has secured the leading position as the most popular destination for German travelers for the 2026 summer season, according to data released by the German Travel Association (DRV) at the ITB Berlin International Tourism Trade Fair. The trend reflects the growing momentum of early bookings in Germany's outbound tourism market.



Data from Travel Data + Analytics (TDA), prepared for DRV as of January 2026, indicates a 7% increase in summer season booking revenues and a 4% rise in the number of bookings compared to the previous year. These figures underscore the strong travel appetite among German tourists.

Between May and October, Türkiye led both in total revenue and number of bookings, followed by Spain and Greece. Among Mediterranean destinations, Türkiye achieved a 12% increase in revenue, while Egypt rose by 18%, Italy by 17%, and Greece by 8%. Sea tourism contributed notably to sector growth, registering a 10% increase in revenue over 2025. Long-haul travel trends indicate that

German tourists are increasingly choosing destinations in the east. Maldives and Mauritius saw a 27% rise in bookings, while Thailand recorded a 3% increase. In contrast, the United States experienced a sharp decline in popularity, dropping from 8th to 14th place on the preferred destinations list due to economic challenges and stringent entry requirements.

DRV President Albin Loidl emphasized that German travelers continue to prioritize "safety and reliability" during periods of global uncertainty. He also noted a significant surge in demand for package tours including flights, with revenues up 14% and guest numbers up 12%, highlighting the continued success of this travel model.

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A FAVORITE OF OTTOMAN PALACE CUISINE: MATBAH RESTAURANT

Located in Istanbul Sultanahmet and operating within Ottoman Hotel Imperial, Matbah Restaurant is an address that has entered the radar of international guides such as Michelin and Gault&Millau with its selection focused on Ottoman palace cuisine.



Matbah Restaurant's menus are based especially on recipes compiled from the periods of Mehmed the Conqueror and Suleiman the Magnificent. They vary in the summer, winter and spring months in accordance with the palace's

seasonal calendar. Chef Kadir Yılmaz has been at the head of the kitchen since 2008. Having devoted an important part of his career to Ottoman palace cuisine, Yılmaz constructs a cuisine based on archive and practice at Matbah Restaurant. Today, the team keeps alive more than 350 original recipes, a large part of which have been translated from Ottoman Turkish sources into Turkish and worked on in the kitchen with "laboratory" precision. Additional recipes in the research phase are also regularly added to the menu. Matbah's menu work is carried out not only in the kitchen, but also on library shelves and in second-hand bookshops. General Manager Serdar Balta and Chef Kadir Yılmaz go from second-hand bookshop to second-hand bookshop, researching handwritten food treatises, Ottoman Turkish notebooks and historical cookbooks, bringing forgotten recipes back to light. In this process, the works and guidance of Nevin Halıcı, one of the most respected researchers of Turkish culinary culture, on Mevlevi Cuisine are also



among the most important sources consulted. Halıcı's "Mevlevi Cuisine" and "Turkish Cuisine with Nevin Halıcı", and sources such as Mehmet Kamil 1844 'Melceü't Tabbahin, one of the most fundamental sources of Ottoman Cuisine, guide the Matbah team both in interpreting the recipes in their original form and in accurately conveying the gastronomic terminology of the period.

TRADITION ON THE PLATE, TRANSPARENCY IN SUPPLY

Matbah's culinary approach is built on the principle of loyalty to recipes and accuracy at the source. No equivalent is used in the products. The ingredient is sourced in the form in which it appears in historical records. The menu includes original dishes such as Biga village tarhana soup with sour cherry pieces, borani hassa, tuffahiye, spinach pirihi, duck stew, goose kebab, helatiye and helva-i Hakaniye. Dishes such as quince dolma with molasses, representing the pre-tomato and pre-pepper period of Ottoman cuisine, are prepared with methods faithful to the original. Flavors such as Ballı Gemicı Böređi, which highlight the sweet-salty combination, are among the characteristic examples of this heritage. In supply, meats are obtained from the Çanakkale-Biga line, pepper paste from Gaziantep, and saffron from Iran. Thus, the original identity of historical recipes is kept alive in today's cuisine.



Chef Kadir Yılmaz



ANTALYA SELECTED TO HOST ROUTES EUROPE 2027 AVIATION CONFERENCE

Antalya has been selected to host the 20th edition of Routes Europe, a leading aviation event focused on strengthening air service connectivity across the continent.

The announcement was made on 4 March 2026 at ITB Berlin, with the 2027 event to be hosted by Fraport TAV Antalya Airport. The gathering will bring together airline, airport and tourism industry decision makers to discuss route development and aviation growth across Europe. Located on Türkiye's Mediterranean coast, Antalya is one of the region's leading leisure destinations and a key market for airlines during both peak and shoulder seasons. The destination recently recorded its highest-ever visitor numbers for January, reflecting growing demand beyond traditional summer travel as its mix of cultural, adventure and eco-focused tourism offerings expands.

Operated by a joint venture between TAV Airports and Fraport, Antalya Airport is Turkey's second busiest airport in terms of international traffic. Completed in April 2025, an EUR 865M investment more than doubled

terminal and airside capacity and increased annual passenger capacity to 65 million. Antalya Airport handled a record 39.2 million passengers in 2025, reinforcing its role as a critical gateway for Türkiye's tourism industry. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, travel and tourism in Türkiye are expected to contribute 7 trillion (\$160 billion) to the economy by 2035, representing nearly 13% of GDP, and support 3.8 million jobs, including more than 500,000 new roles over the next decade. Steven Small, Director of Routes, said, "Routes Europe 2027 comes at a perfect time for the airport, having recently completed the first phase of the major expansion project. This significant investment has resulted in capacity for further traffic growth." Small added: "With decision makers from over 110 of the region's leading airlines in attendance, I am confident that this event will unlock new opportunities, drive sustainable

growth and solidify Antalya's position as a leading holiday airport in the Mediterranean region."

Deniz Varol, Fraport TAV GM, stated, "We are delighted to welcome Routes Europe 2027 to Antalya at such an important stage in our airport's development. Following the completion of the first phase of our major expansion program, Antalya Airport is well equipped to accommodate future growth and further strengthen its connectivity across Europe and beyond".

Frank Quante, Fraport TAV GM, added, "Hosting this prestigious event will provide a valuable opportunity to engage with airline partners and industry stakeholders, showcase the strength of the Antalya market, and support the sustainable development of new air services. We look forward to demonstrating the long-term potential of Antalya as a year-round Mediterranean destination."



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A FIRST IN TÜRKİYE... THE MICE SECTOR IS SETTING SAIL

Yako Groups Chairman of the Board Galip Ölmez said, "For the first time in Türkiye, a cruise ship is being transformed into a fully equipped MICE platform managed under a single roof for corporate meetings, incentive trips, launch events and incentive programs."

Yako Groups Chairman of the Board Galip Ölmez said, "After Yako MICE realized a historic cooperation with the country's cruise company Miray Cruises, the MICE sector's interest in cruise tourism increased. For the first time in Turkey, a cruise ship is being transformed into a fully equipped MICE platform managed under a single roof for corporate meetings, incentive trips, launch events and incentive programs." Ölmez said, "As of 2025, the global MICE sector has reached a size of approximately 945 Billion Dollars, becoming one of the fastest-growing segments of tourism. This market, which is expected to reach 1.8 Trillion Dollars by 2033, is in the position of a critical engine of the world economy with more than 11.3 million events and more than 1.5 billion participants annually. In this sector, where 86 percent of Fortune 1000 companies allocate budget for MICE, the most striking trend of recent years is the relocation of corporate events to cruise ships."

AFTER THE GOLDEN YEAR, A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY IS OPENING

Yako Groups Chairman of the Board Galip Ölmez continued his words as follows: "Türkiye experienced the golden year of cruise tourism in 2025. According to the data of the Ministry



of Transport and Infrastructure, the number of cruise passengers arriving at Turkish ports throughout the year exceeded 2.1 million, breaking the all-time record. The annual growth rate in passenger numbers was 52.3 percent, well above the expectations of the sector. 1,800 cruise ships visited our country's ports. Behind this success lies Turkey's unique geographical location. As the only country with coasts on the

Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Sea at the same time, Istanbul, Kuşadası, İzmir, Bodrum, Antalya and Black Sea ports offer a route richness that complements each other. According to WTTC research, cruise tourism contributed 98.5 Billion Dollars to the global economy in 2024. Turkey is face to face with the opportunity to multiply per capita spending and the economic multiplier in port cities by carrying this momentum to the MICE dimension."



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