

Another Year of Intensive EU-Turkey Chamber Co-operation

State of Affairs



Turkish Chamber Development Programme II





Turkish Chamber Development Programme II is a Eurochambres initiative supported by the European Union under its Civil Society Development programme for Turkey, implemented in co-operation with TOBB. It aims at promoting co-operation between EU and Turkish Chambers of Commerce and Industry and strengthening the role of Turkish Chambers in civil society.

Introduction

Taking into account recent developments regarding Turkey-EU relations as well as the country's historically well-established and deep rooted Chamber structure, the Chamber network in Turkey has a significant role and responsibility within civil society in representing the business community towards local and national authorities, to facilitate linkages with their EU counterparts and to promote the "internationalisation" process of country's regions in general.

The **Turkish Chamber Development Programme** (TCDP) initially launched in 2002 and implemented successfully for a one year term, was decided to be renewed for a second term. The programme again aims at supporting Turkish Chambers to perform these crucial tasks.

Similar to the first phase of the programme, this objective has been realised by establishing sustainable partnerships between selected Chambers both from Turkey and the EU. Technical assistance has been provided to allow these partnerships to develop and implement joint pilot projects, with the emphasis mainly on introducing new as well as innovative services within the Turkish Chambers.

Within a period of only 14 months, effective steps have been taken, ensuring a tangible improvement of the Chambers' performances vis-a-vis their membership and local institutions. The eleven demonstration projects of TCDP-II have highlighted the crucial role that Chambers can and should play in the overall process of preparing the business communities for the international market and enhancing their competitiveness.

The present brochure succinctly describes the activities, which have been carried out by each partnership. Its wide dissemination will contribute in sharing these best practices with the entire Chamber network in Turkey and in Europe.

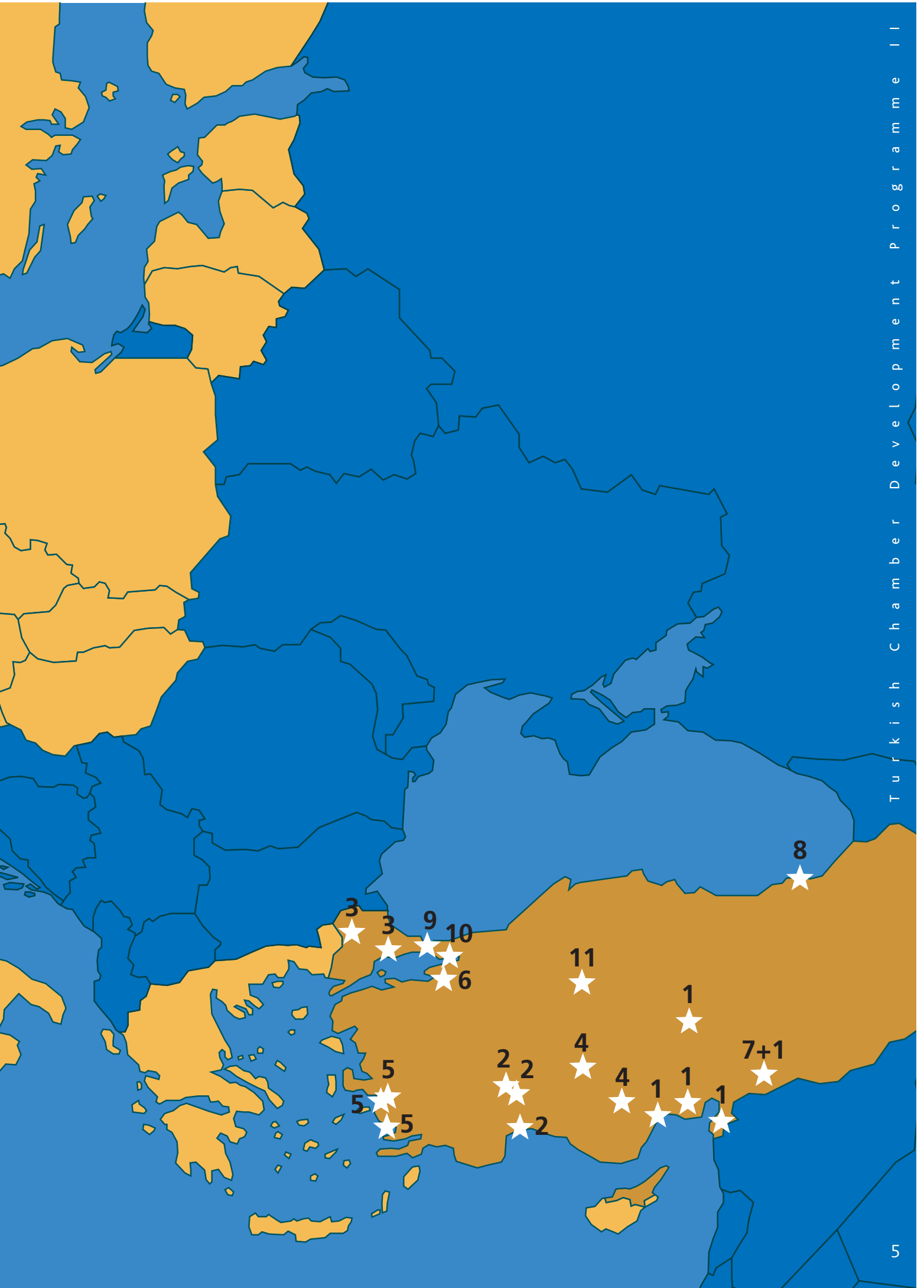


EUROCHAMBRES and TOBB shaking hands at the opening session of TCDP II kick-off meeting in Istanbul, December 2004

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Increasing the level of international trade activities of companies in East Mediterranean Region

Delighted with the success achieved during TCDP I, Sheffield and Adana Chamber of Commerce are once again working in partnership to assist Turkish SMEs to grasp export opportunities.

Joining the original partnership for TCDP II were Antakya and Mersin Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Gaziantep and Kayseri Chambers of Commerce. The extended and improved partnership has led to the realisation of the projects objectives:

- The development of "The East Mediterranean Trade Centre", which represents a unified body of the local Foreign Trade Clubs of the region,
- A series of capacity building workshops led by Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, covering a variety of topics essential to internationalisation in a business support context. This has included a formal workshop in Adana, and a training visit to Europe for staff from the Turkish Chambers,
- An upgrade of the Adana Foreign Trade Club's web site (www.adtk.org) to East Mediterranean Trade Portal, which is a new step for all members into e-commerce.

The first Foreign Trade Club meeting and launch of the East Mediterranean Export Centre (EMEDEX) was held in Adana on 22 February 2005, with over 60 delegates in attendance. Prestigious guest speakers and members of the regions Press attended this event and subsequent launches of neighbouring networks. Each of the Chambers involved with this project now has their own Foreign Trade Club, based upon the model of Adana's FTC, which was developed following the first phase of this project.

The culmination of the project has been the development of the East Mediterranean Foreign Trade Centre's Trade Portal: EMEDEX (www.emedex.org). The Portal enhances a company' export marketing capabilities by providing a search facility where European companies can identify potential Turkish partners. Turkish SMEs will be able to showcase their products in an e-catalogue. The site will also facilitate exporters to access relevant information regarding trade fairs, trade legislation, promotions and links to other useful sources of information.

The East Mediterranean Foreign Trade Center will continue to be an important tool in enabling SMEs to develop their export potential over the coming years. The benefits offered by the Trade Club and the Portal support innovative international growth amongst their members.

As part of its success, the EMEDEX services could be extended into other areas of Turkey.

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A sustainable local development model for the tourism sector of the West Mediterranean Region

The partners have built their project on the positive results achieved under the first phase (TCDP I), providing the formal basis for the development of a new tourism sector based on inland tourism dynamics. The partnership has involved SMEs in Antalya, Burdur and Isparta, and has been managed by Antalya CCI with the collaboration of Burdur CCI and Isparta CCI. Barcelona CCI has provided the necessary technical assistance.

The following main objectives of the project have been achieved successfully:

- Improving the development of SMEs, by generating new tourism products and marketing based on new communication technologies. The Internet Booking System has been updated and is ready to receive the first bookings. The system offers a wide range of products at the moment: 21 hotels and rural accommodations, 1 rent a car company, 2 tourism activities and 45 offers of tourism packages. All of this has been the result of the involvement of 29 SMEs of the West Mediterranean Region. This number is expected to increase in the short run (www.westmediterraneantourism.org).
- Establishing a Marketing Destination Organisation (MDO) in the regions of Antalya, Isparta and Burdur with the valuable participation of SMEs from the tourism sector. That could set the example for other Turkish regions with similar characteristics. All participating in the project are actively involved in the Competitiveness Group. 5 representatives from this Group have been included in the West Mediterranean Development Foundation as a Task Group. They provide a sustainable perspective for the project that has now a consolidated basis to act in the dynamisation of the inland tourism in the region. The public and private sectors are highly encouraged to participate.
- Transferring appropriate technology to Turkish technicians and professionals so that MDO can operate by relying on local resources only once the project is completed. A number of individual and collective meetings and seminars with all companies involved in the project have been carried out by both Turkish and Barcelona experts, in order to guarantee the transfer of technology and knowledge. The Turkish team of experts has taken now a lead role in preparation for the Task Group, the Competitiveness Group and the Internet Booking System.

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Strengthening the role of the Foreign Language Center in Edirne CCI to develop the competitive skills of its members

TCDP II has enabled Lyon CCI to deepen its co-operation with Edirne CCI, as well as to enlarge its partnership to Corlù CCI. Building on the encouraging results of TCDP I, the partners have designed a series of subsequent initiatives with the final aim of setting up new language courses and training local trainers accordingly.

The capacities of Edirne and Corlu have been initially reinforced by a study visit, designed to give the Turkish partners a good insight into the functioning and structure of the Lyon CCI's foreign language centre. Besides, Corlù CCI has fully conducted a market survey targeting both local companies and students to assess their interest in taking English courses. Edirne CCI has placed a new commercial offer for language courses (English & Greek) at the right price, based on 4 programmes:

- Start communicating in English (90 h),
- Communicate in English in basic professional situations (90 h),
- Master your English in current business situations (60 h),
- Greek for beginners in evening courses (50 h)

Following positive feedbacks, Corlù CCI and Edirne CCI have elaborated an appropriate commercial and communication action plan to advertise their new services (dissemination of general brochures, posters, and commercial documents, etc.), and finally opted for the set up of various level based groups under the supervision of the Lyon CCI's foreign language centre:

- Local trainers have been selected and trained by a native English trainer from Lyon CCI's foreign language centre,
- 2 new English groups (1 beginner and 1 false beginner), totalling 20 trainees, + 2 new Greek groups totalling 30 people have been opened in Edirne CCI,
- 6 groups (5 beginners and 1 pre-intermediate), of 60 trainees in total, have been opened in Corlù CCI,

Lyon CCI has ensured a permanent monitoring of the courses and trainers both at distance and on the spot. Overall, the project has proven to be a real success both in Edirne CCI (average satisfaction marks: 8,77 for training and 9,67 for trainers out of 10) and Corlù CCI (average satisfaction marks: 9,14 for training and 9,37 for trainers out of 10).

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Building professional and sustainable knowledge through exports promotion services for SMEs

The partnership between Marseille-Provence CCI and Konya CI has been consolidated, and extended to Karaman CCI. A series of activities have been set up according to the needs expressed by the Turkish partners.

Konya CI has sought to deepen its co-operation on the following topics:

- International services: the Chamber has increased the added value initially supplied to SMEs by creating more customized programmes for the benefit of an increased number of companies. This was made possible through: upgraded marketing tools, SME's specific targeting, improvement of contents and more frequent updating of Konya CI web site, re-engineering of information services, and development of training sessions.
- International and domestic fund raising: the SPX UNIDO programme has been identified as the main appropriate support for 2 strategic industrial sectors (automotive spare parts, textiles),
- Foreign direct investment: in order to compile relevant information as well as to promote Konya investment conditions, Konya CI has prepared and launched a web site under Provence Promotion's supervision: www.investinkonya.org.tr. The web site is a unique example in Turkey for a locally-based FDI promotion agency.

The Karaman CCI has launched a survey to identify exporting companies' needs, providing the basis for the design of an action plan dedicated to international projects:

- Information: a mail database has been designed and the Chamber web site is currently functioning (www.ktso.org.tr)
- Training sessions: a basic English language training programme and a seminar on international trade techniques have been successfully implemented,
- Trade missions and fairs: using its new communication tools, Karaman CCI selects, promotes and joins delegations abroad.

The partners have set up a long-term economic co-operation for the mutual benefit of their three Chambers. To that end, they have decided to start a concrete follow up on additional priorities. On the one hand, actions will be undertaken in the textile field between Marseille-Provence and Konya, and on the other hand, in FDI projects involving Provence-Promotion, Konya (Karaman could be part as well) and focusing on a potential co-operation between investment promotion agencies.

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Increasing technical capacity of the Chambers by introducing quality services

KUTAP I had emphasized the needs to increase the technical capacity of Kusadasi CC in offering quality services to its member companies, and had confirmed the leading role of the Chamber in strengthening the competitiveness of Kusadasi enterprises. TCDP II has enabled the partners to take concrete actions in that direction.

To meet this objective, the partners have set up a Small Business Development Centre (KIGEM) and implemented a series of capacity-building seminars and workshop. Good practices have been presented during study visits to the Valencia region.

In collaboration with Kusadasi CC, Valencia CCC has developed technical reports, providing the basis for the implementation of main services within KIGEM: Training Programme, Tourist Quality Service, Enterprise Creation and Start-Up.... Spanish technicians have helped to develop "on-line technical assistance services"

The help of local stakeholders has been essential in the development of KIGEM: 6 technical meetings have taken place with travel agencies, hoteliers, municipality, tour operators and University. They will also be involved in the definition of future actions.

KIGEM is today a sustainable structure (marketing and financial planning), fully equipped, that hires a full time secretary as well as 2 part time experts, and hosts 6 new innovative SMEs (tourism and trade). An employment service is provided for workers and students, and 5 language trainee courses have been opened.

Besides, the partners have concentrated their efforts on the implementation of the City of Smiles Programme. 3 tourism experts have visited Kusadasi CC and issued an analysis report ahead of the implementation of Kusadasi QUALITUR programme.

Finally, the best practices of the KUTAP programme have been transferred to DIDIM CCI and SELCUK CCI during the project. Meetings and workshops have been organized on cooperation enhancement, and working groups have been created during the project implementation.

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Stimulating the expertise in Bursa in doing business with the EU

The project aimed at bringing together expertise and business opportunities in the regions of Bursa and Antwerp-Waasland regarding certain sectors which are present in both regions, e.g. the textile sector and the automotive, metal processing and machine building sector. A second target concerned the transfer to the Bursa CCI of a detailed know how in advising Turkish companies on "acquis communautaire" that is relevant for their products.

As far as the exchange of business opportunities is concerned, a range of different activities was set up. At the opening conference in January 2005 in Bursa, Flemish experts from the fashion and automotive sector explained the current ways of cooperation between fashion designers and foreign textile manufacturers and between large car assembly plants and suppliers of automotive parts.

An interesting number of well-known Antwerp fashion designers confirmed working already with Turkish manufacturers for the production of their collections or to be interested establishing for the first time such a cooperation. Bursa textile enterprises were invited to develop contacts via the portal site of "Modenatie", a website which guides interested companies to the sites and coordinates of more than 40 designers of which many are operating internationally. On the other hand, Flemish importers of textile products did not respond to trade proposals of Turkish companies, probably due to the heavy competition from Asian countries.

In the metal processing sector, the dissemination of Turkish trade proposals of mainly car parts producers did not result in concrete interests from Flemish automotive parts producers. On the other hand, a very promising discovery was the readiness of large Flemish producers in the field of machinery and high tech equipment to work together with Turkish producers of high quality parts to be delivered in rather smaller quantities or even the production of complete assemblies in accordance with a prototype of certain electronic equipment.

To conclude, this project has shown that Turkish enterprises can find business opportunities in Flanders if they adapt their production capacity to the requirements of the Flemish fashion sector and the machine building and electronics industries.

In order to achieve the second target, a group of more than 50 Turkish enterprises were invited to describe their products and intentions for an international cooperation. From these profiles, 13 different model reports have been worked out with relevant "acquis communautaire". These reports help the Bursa CCI and its members to understand which EU rules apply to their products, where to find all information about these laws and standards, etc. As a sustainable result in this project, the Bursa CCI can continue working out in coming years similar reports for other companies interested in doing business with the EU.

The CCIs of Bursa and Antwerp-Waasland and their respective Euro Info Centres will continue working closely together to the benefit of enterprises in their respective regions.

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The Chamber as a prime mover to foster foreign trade

With the final aim of creating optimal conditions to facilitate the internationalization process of the Gaziantep business environment, Rotterdam CC and Gaziantep CI have decided to work out a management vision on international trade, based on local members' needs.

Products and services, focused on opportunities of international trade activities especially with the European Union, have been developed with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of Gaziantep companies, as well as to preparing them for a possible EU accession.

To meet this objective, the staff of Gaziantep CI has been trained in several sessions. During the process, strategic views on the most appropriate products and service range have been exchanged. For the operational part, selected business cases have been taken up.



Gaziantep staff has been introduced into the networks of Rotterdam CC and TIC Turkey. This latter contains a lot of trade developing organisations in relation with Turkey like Municipality of Rotterdam, Port of Rotterdam, Dutch Ministry of Rotterdam, City Development Council of Economic Affairs, EVD (= IGEME), Netherlands Turkish Business Association (NETUBA), banks and other economic operators. Besides, Rotterdam staff has introduced the Gaziantep Area in several presentations on doing business with Turkey during various meetings in The Netherlands.

These actions, facilitated through TCDP II, have resulted in an increased Dutch interest for the Gaziantep Area, and have paved the way for future cooperation. Gaziantep CI and Rotterdam CC have signed a memorandum of understanding that shall lead to a covenant within the TIC Turkey concept. This aims to promote reciprocal trade and investment between enterprises in The Netherlands and Turkey, with a special focus on the Rotterdam and Gaziantep Areas.

Gaziantep CI will soon set up a trade and investment desk for the Dutch market within its office. The Rotterdam office will provide technical assistance.

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Internationalizing the Trabzon region

The city of Trabzon seeks to develop the region in an international direction. To that end, Trabzon CCI has expressed an interest in strengthening its capacity, by setting up an international department.

Trabzon staff and member companies have been intensively trained in selected topics. The training has been carried out in Trabzon by two representatives from the Danish CC. Six Modules of one week's duration each have taken place in February, April and May 2005. An average of 23 persons has participated each time. All the material has been translated from English into Turkish. The 6 modules have dealt with:

- How to start up export - step by step
- Export strategy
- International marketing
- Higher productivity & flexible production and business culture
- EU law, standards & regulations
- E-trade & e-marketing

A CD with all the training material has been produced in Turkish. The CD contains in total around 500 Power Point Pages. All the partnerships within the TCDP II will receive a copy of the CD during the Close Down Ceremony.

3 representatives from Trabzon CCI have been introduced to the best practices and main functions of the Danish CC's International Trade Department during a mission in Copenhagen. The Turkish Counsellors' Office in Copenhagen has been involved in the study tour.

Main emphasis has been put on the topics of the Training Modules but also on the economical and political lobby work, trade associations, press etc. Experiences on how to operate an ATA-Carnet set-up, an Euro Info Centre, a Business Contact Centre have also been exchanged to the mutual benefit of the parties.



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Start Exporting Programme: how to promote SMEs' internationalisation

The Istanbul region is one of the most important business hub in Turkey and generates one fifth of Turkey's total output. Istanbul CC brings together 300,000 companies, mostly SMEs, among which 8,000-9,000 are exporters.

Based on this fact, Istanbul CC has been willing to develop a specific programme for the internationalisation of SMEs which have the capacity but have not yet started exporting.

Madrid CCI, with a wide experience in developing company support programmes, has designed a tailor-made pilot programme: the Start Exporting Programme (SEP) and transferred to Istanbul staff its expertise and know-how on each phase of the programme implementation (evaluation, training, communication and monitoring):

- The programme has been disseminated during a seminar followed by a press conference in which a collaboration agreement has been signed between both Chambers to foster their mutual collaboration. More than two hundred companies have attended the seminar and pre-registered for the SEP,

- Training of ICOC staff in the SEP,
- Selection of 20 companies out of 200 through surveys and one to one meetings,
- Training of the 4 promoters assigned by ICOC for the individual consultation of the selected 20 companies,
- Implementation of the SEP: visit of the companies (30 hours in each),
- Auditing and continuity of the SEP-II under the umbrella of Madrid CCI. During Istanbul CC's visit to Madrid a Letter of Understanding has been signed.

The implementation of the project has contributed to the development of new services in Istanbul CC with view to better serving its members and promoting the internationalisation of local companies.



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Boosting companies' internationalization

Through its cooperation with UC Liguri, Kocaeli CI has sought to respond to 3 main concerns on internationalisation: the under-development of its business support services, the insufficient level of knowledge about its members' needs, and the scarce participation of the local companies in international event and/or European programmes.

The partners have set out key priorities, providing the basis for a series of actions centered on information and technical assistance services to companies:

- A database containing the profile of each company dealing with international activities has been designed and will be used to find business partners abroad, as well as to identify proper services to companies to be set up in the future,
- A monthly newsletter providing business opportunities from European companies has been launched,
- Two economic missions have been organised in order to allow Turkish local companies to meet with Italian counterparts and to start assessing business opportunities,
- An added-value service on CE Marking has been discussed with the Italian Notified Body RINA, in order to develop a training programme in EU legislation and standardisation process for Kocaeli staff, so that they can better assist their members.

Some activities were also carried out to further promote Kocaeli CI at regional and national level and to strengthen its networking abilities:

- Kocaeli CI has started raising awareness on its mission and competencies at local and regional level, with a view to developing strategies in synergy with local relevant stakeholders,
- Kocaeli CI has integrated an EU network aimed at stimulating its participation in international events and at establishing a first contact with business organisations and companies at EU level.



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A quality model for the Turkish Chamber network

The Quality Project has involved TOBB and BCC working closely together to involve this time 25 Chambers in a programme of development and Accreditation. An engaging programme of activity has been achieved and true partnership working has been exemplified with the TOBB Project Manager and representatives from Ankara CI, Adapazari CCI and Kocaeli CI taking a lead role and successfully briefing the participating Chambers in preparation for the Development Visits of the BCC Assessors.

The challenging objectives of the project have been to:

- Review the Accreditation Standard
- Conduct Accreditation Re-assessments of the original 10 Chambers from Phase 1: **Adapazari CCI, Aegean Region CI, Alanya CCI, Ankara CI, Denizli CI, Gaziantep CI, Istanbul CC, Istanbul CI, Istanbul Chamber of Shipping, and Kocaeli CI.** Inspections are carried out every 3 years by an Assessor whose recommendations are considered by the Accreditation Board to award, award to certain conditions, or declined Accredited status. Out of 10 re-assessed Chambers, 9 have been granted again Accredited Status for a duration of 3 years and 1 has been accredited for one year.
- Make Development Visits to 15 new Chambers: **Afyon CCI, Ankara CC, Corlu CCI, Denizli CC, Diyarbakir CCI, Elazig CCI, Gaziantep CC, Gebze CC, Giresun CCI, Izmir CC, Karaman CCI, Konya CC, Mersin CCI, Sivas CCI, Usak CCI.** Following the visits, the BCC experts have set down in a report the weakness of each Chamber in 5 sections that provide the structure of the Standard (Engagement with the Business Community, Membership, Financial health, Governance & Management, Regional, national & international development of the network). The visited Chambers have been also requested to fill out a self-assessment form in advance of the Assessments.
- Conduct Accreditation Assessments to the 15 Chambers. The Chambers' self-assessment scores have been presented to the assessors for consideration and endorsement. 14 Chambers have been awarded Accredited status for 3 years.
- Train Turkish speaking assessors for the future development of the Standard. This has been an additional contribution of TOBB.

By achieving all its projected outputs, this extended Quality project has mainly contributed to the long term vision of TOBB: the establishment of a single coherent network of local business organisations that offers high quality representation, services and support to help businesses thrive and grow.

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Cover and Design:

- Morris & Chapman, Brussels

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