

15TH EURASIAN ECONOMIC SUMMIT WAS COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY

15th Eurasian Economic Summit started in Istanbul and finished in Izmir was participated by 13 Presidents, 1 Prime Minister, 1 Speaker of the Parliament, 3 Vice Prime Minister and 30 Ministers from 50 countries

COOPERATION, PEACE MARK CEREMONY

Prominent guests at the opening session included presidents, prime ministers, religious leaders, statesmen, representatives of non-governmental organizations and businesspeople from dozens of countries.

Eurasia is drawing the attention of the entire world with its geography, young and dynamic population, and rising prosperity, while the Arab Spring's democratization process continues nearby, said Turkey's EU Minister Egemen Bağış, in his opening speech on behalf of the Turkish government. "You can call Eurasia the heart or the chessboard of the world. Whatever you call it, Eurasia has always maintained its place as the center of world power struggles. A geographer once said that he who rules Eurasia rules the world. Now we can see that more than cooperation, conflict is on the desk of Eurasia. I think it is good to say here, from the center of Eurasia, Istanbul, no one can rule this region. Whoever tries to rule this geography alone can only cause a heart attack for the region."

Cemil Çiçek, the speaker of Turkey's Parliament, said the region should focus on peace.

"Interdependence forces us to search for ways to achieve development in the region. For happiness and prosperity, we have to work together for this aim. Meetings such as the Eurasia Economic Summit pave the way toward mutual understanding." Çiçek also said the main goal should be the regeneration of the Silk Road by raising visa restrictions.

Akkan Suver, president of the Marmara Group Foundation, said the summit is a base for evaluating alternative models for equally distributing prosperity and creating a fairer world. Suver also said reading economic statistics from a "per capita perspective" is not adequate to see the real situation in the world. "We are here to discuss these topics in an intellectual way," Suver said.

Governor Mihail Formuzal of the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia called on businessmen for investments. Businessmen who invest in Gagauzia "will not be asked to pay any taxes for five years." Filip Vujanovic, president of Montenegro, also said the summit has remarkable importance, especially coming as it does before the upcoming U.N. summit in Rio. President of Macedonia Gjorge Ivanov said Southeastern Europe has experienced many problems in the past 20 years, but now it is time for cooperation.

LIBYA ASKS FOR HELP TO RESTRUCTURE OIL FACILITIES

Libya's Economy Minister Ahmed al-Koshli said during the Economy Session that his country wants to benefit from the technology Turkey possesses, speaking in the "Energy, Economy and Sustainable Development" session of the Eurasian Economic Summit.

"The know-how and experience Turkey has is very important for us. We want Turkey to share its experiences with Libya," he said, adding that his country is working on integrating with the global economy. Al-Koshli also said Libya's bourse is now open. "Free Libya wants to learn about environmentally friendly technologies, especially solar and wind energy, so that we will have the opportunity to export clean energy to Europe and other countries."

Meanwhile, Mohammad Reza Farzin, Iran's deputy minister of economy and finance, said Iran's government has decided to initiate reforms in the areas of energy prices and economic development.

Unfair distribution

Iran is the 17th largest economy in the world, with its \$930 billion GDP, according to data from the International Monetary Fund, Farzin said. The country has the second largest oil and natural gas reserves in the world.

Keeping energy prices artificially low leads to unfair income distribution, energy smuggling and higher energy consumption, Farzin said, adding that if the current rate of increase in energy consumption in Iran continues for the next 20 years, the country will consume all the oil it produces.

CULTURAL DIALOGUE MATCHLESS FOR PEACE

Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, secretary-general of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said nothing could replace dialogue for building a peaceful environment.

Speaking at the intercultural dialogue session, İhsanoğlu underlined the importance of dialogue. "Peace culture has to be renewed, this is what we owe to future generations, we ought to do our bit for them," he said. "A dangerous and ambiguous situation exists in the world nowadays," he added.

Extremists intolerant

"Extremist rightist movements bother societies in Europe. These groups are intolerant of cultural diversity. Even though they are a minority now, we cannot ignore the potential of creating an unstable environment. When we take a glance at social media we see how fast hatred spreads. Islam and Muslims became a target for these groups. In these countries where Islamophobia rises up, politicians back these groups. The outcome is exclusion for immigrants and abuse of human rights," İhsanoğlu said.

İhsanoğlu recalled the massacre committed by an extreme rightist, Anders Behring Breivik, in which 77 people were killed last July in Norway.

"That man was influenced by the anti-Muslim campaign. The OIC is against all kinds of discrimination. We reject extremism, anti-Semitism and anti-Christian approaches."

Citing the United Nations' "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief," which was signed in 2011, İhsanoğlu said the OIC aims to come together to build a dialog based on mutual understanding for this struggle. Caucasian Muslims Office chairman Şeyhülislam Allahşükür Paşazade, Turkey's Chief Rabbi İshak Haleva, Apostolic Nuncio to Turkey Archbishop Antonia Lucibello, Mongolian Buddhist Association President Khamba Lama Natsagdorj, Estonian Business School Acting Rector Arno Almann and Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilization President Salim al-Hassani were among the other participants in the session.

WOMEN SHOULD BE AT CENTER OF DEVELOPMENT

In order for development to be sustainable, women should be placed at the center of development policies, Fatma Şahin, Turkey's minister of family and social policies, said during the "Management, Women and Future" session of the Eurasian Economic Summit.

“Peace in society depends on sustainable development. Women should be placed at the center of development to make it sustainable. We have to activate the potential of women in every field. The rule of law, democratization and sustainable economic development are indispensable for us,” Şahin said. Increasing per capita income, maintaining advanced democracy, and maintaining the rule of law are all important for women’s rights, she said, adding that the government has achieved a transformation in civil society during the last 10 years, referring to the period that the Justice and Development Party has been in office.

“Before, we were marginalizing and not listening to each other. We could not discuss these issues. Now we listen to each other more. They [society at large] listen to us, too. This is important for democratization and the level women have reached.”

One needs to catch the zeitgeist first, she said, touching on deep regional differences. “Where is the [advanced] world? And where are we? Is there one kind of world if we look at the old and modern world? Take a look at the problems that Scandinavian countries face and then take a look at the Middle East. Compare parliaments in both regions. [You will see that] we live in a world of extremes.”

Referring to the increasing rates of women serving in parliaments and industry, Şahin said, “There are women who say ‘I want to elect my own policymakers. This is my innate right. I want the ballot box,’ and fight for it.”

An issue bigger than party politics

The issue of women’s inclusion is bigger than political parties, said Sebahat Tuncel, a deputy from the Peace and Democracy Party and a member of the Commission on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men, speaking at meeting titled “Searching for a public accord on gender equality.”

“We [women] can understand each other. We can form a new language at this point. A beautiful future is in our hands.

We want to live in a good and equal world. We do not want to be discriminated against because of our gender, language, or identity. The world belongs to all of us. We will decide how to live here,” she said, adding that women should be more organized to achieve greater rights.

Binnaz Toprak, a deputy from the Republican People’s Party (CHP), said in the same meeting that 33 percent of CHP representatives in Parliament are women, and this is an achievement. “It is not easy to break down the resistance of men, but [our] campaign has been very successful.”

PRESIDENTS PLEDGE TO FIGHT POVERTY

Statesmen from across the world declare their will to fight against poverty and hunger on the last day of the 15th Eurasian Economic Summit. The focus of the summit was the Eurasia region, but both problems and solutions are global, leaders agree. ‘Our differences will complete other’s missing parts,’ says Albanian President Topi

The ambition to fight poverty marked the closing session of the 15th Eurasian Economic Summit, which gathered active and former presidents of several countries in the Aegean city of İzmir. Turkey’s Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek also delivered a speech at the event.

President of Albania Bamir Topi said in his remarks that a new start should be made in the struggle against world hunger. Tens of millions of people the world over are affected by an ongoing food crisis, he said. These people are forced to live without adequate and balanced nutrition. “We have to move forward to stop this as soon as possible. We are obliged to fight against poverty. We need a social-economic change to enrich Eurasia. Our differences will complete others’ missing parts. This is our

richness. They create a major potential for us to co-operate. We are in a city now which is the center of a flow that affects every place on earth. Nothing in the world is isolated.”

Eurasian countries should create joint development policies, according to Gjorge Ivanov, the president of Macedonia. Development plans covering the period until 2050 should be put in place, and countries in the region should do this together, he said. “The G-8 countries have said they will write off the debts of poor countries next year. The [debt] figures are higher than arms expenditures.”

Filip Vujanovic, president of Montenegro, said the struggle against poverty in his country began in 2007, when measures were taken to improve health and education services. Vujanovic said employment is the third step in Montenegro’s action plan.

Mihail Formuzal, governor of Moldova’s autonomous territory of Gagauzia, said there are countries that are immune to the economic crisis. “According to statistics from the World Bank, one billion people suffered from hunger in 2009. This is not only a matter for poor countries now; developed countries are the part of the problem. We want to put this on the world’s agenda. The population of Gagauzia is migrating to developed countries such as Russia, Turkey, and the European Union countries. Thirty percent of Gagauzia’s people have left to country to work abroad.”

İzmir Chamber of Commerce (İZTO) President Ekrem Demirtaş, host of the session, said: “All of these messages have been clear: Hunger, poverty, and unemployment exist in the region, but the countries themselves are not responsible for these problems.”

In his closing statement, Akkan Suver, president of the Marmara Group Foundation, which organized the summit, noted that this year’s summit was heavily attended by representatives from China, Bosnia Herzegovina and Azerbaijan. Suver said he was particularly happy to have been honored with Mongolia’s President’s Medal, and to have seen a newly published book by Azerbaijani journalist Halit Niyazov, which tells the 15-year history of the Eurasian Economic Summit. The 300-page book, published by the foundation, is available from the Marmara Group.