

EMITT welcomes its visitors at Istanbul Expo Center this year

EMITT, the meeting point of tourism in the East Mediterranean and Eurasia, opens its doors for the 29th time

EMITT – East Mediterranean International Tourism and Travel Exhibition, where ICA Events brings together cultures and destinations, has begun its 29th edition. The exhibition, which welcomed its visitors with the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Environment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Fikri Ataoğlu and Governor of Istanbul Davut Gül, will host more than 100 international exhibitors from 29 countries, along with hundreds of domestic exhibitors this year. Running until 7 February, the exhibition will bring together professionals from all over the world under one roof at its new venue, Istanbul Expo Center, as a platform that generates business, remains memorable, and creates value.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Environment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Fikri Ataoğlu:

“EMITT is not only an exhibition but also a highly valuable platform where the tourism policies of the future are shaped.”

Governor of Istanbul Davut Gül:

“Türkiye has made remarkable progress in tourism. Istanbul is one of the driving forces behind this success.”

Deputy Chairman of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Council Gökhan Gümüşdağ:

“Tourism is one of the strongest sectors of our country's economy.”

General Manager of the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) Sinan Seha Türkseven:

“We believe that we will further strengthen our country's strong position in global tourism and take it to even greater heights in the coming period.”

Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi:

“Travelling to Istanbul from every corner of the world has never been easier throughout history.”

TÜRSAB Vice Chairman of the Board Davut Günaydın:

“We are launching the promotion of the Island Cyprus Promotion Campaign starting from Diyarbakır.”

Member of the Board of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce Bahadır Yaşık:

“In September, we will host a total of 25,000 academic doctors at three congresses in Istanbul.”

President of the Turkish Hoteliers Federation (TÜROFED) Erkan Yağcı:

“We have entered a period in which competition in tourism has become even more intense.”

EMITT Exhibition Director Banu Keskin:

“Today, EMITT is one of the most critical stops on the global tourism calendar.”

EMITT – East Mediterranean International Tourism and Travel Exhibition, which creates added value by making significant contributions to Türkiye's tourism ecosystem, has opened its doors to visitors at its new venue, Istanbul Expo Center, following its strategic restructuring. The opening ceremony of the exhibition, which generated a business volume of more than EUR 482 million in the previous year and has become a major attraction for the sector, was hosted by EMITT Exhibition Director Banu Keskin and honored by the attendance of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Environment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Fikri Ataoğlu and Governor of Istanbul Davut Gül, together with Deputy Chairman of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Council Gökhan Gümüşdağ, General Manager of the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) Sinan Seha Türkseven, Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi, TÜRSAB Vice Chairman of the Board Davut Günaydın, Member of the Board of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce Bahadır Yaşık, and President of the Turkish Hoteliers Federation (TÜROFED) Erkan Yağcı at WOW Istanbul Hotel.

"EMITT is a hub that has laid the foundations of Türkiye's exhibition industry for tourism"

Opening her speech by saying, "Today, we are celebrating not only the opening of an exhibition but also the future of tourism, the meeting of cultures, and the birth of new collaborations. Today, as one of the most critical stops on the global tourism calendar, EMITT is one of Türkiye's strongest brands worldwide," EMITT Exhibition Director Banu Keskin continued: "We are determined not to compromise on the vision we have set. We began preparations for the organization you are witnessing today six months in advance by defining all our strategic steps. We still have a long road ahead, but our direction is clear and our determination is unwavering. EMITT is not merely an exhibition; it is a hub that has laid the foundations of Türkiye's tourism exhibition industry, continuously growing and developing the sector year after year. We continue to build upon this well-established value every year. This year, through a strategic move, we relocated our exhibition to Istanbul Expo Center (IFM). This is not simply a change of venue; it is the result of our commitment to providing our valued stakeholders with a far more accessible, higher-quality, and commercially efficient platform. Our goal is to focus on 'quality connections and create an ecosystem where every exhibitor returns with tangible business agreements. I am proud to share already that EMITT will reach a very special milestone next year. We will celebrate the EMITT 30th Anniversary Grand Gathering here once again at IFM on 4–6 February 2027. I wish EMITT every success for our country, our region, and all our stakeholders, and I hope you have a productive exhibition."

"TRNC introduces its tourism potential to the world through the "Island Cyprus Promotion Campaign"

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Environment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Fikri Ataoğlu stated in his speech: "EMITT is not only an exhibition; it is also a highly valuable platform where countries present their visions, the foundations of cooperation are laid, and the tourism policies of the future are shaped. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a unique destination located in the heart of the Mediterranean, with a history dating back thousands of years and a strong identity rooted in its culture, nature, and people. In this context, the Island Cyprus Promotion Campaign, which we recently launched, represents an extremely important step for TRNC tourism. Through this campaign carried out across Türkiye, we have introduced our country's natural, cultural, and historical riches to broad audiences. We are extremely pleased with the strong interest the campaign has attracted and the positive feedback we have received. In the coming period, we will launch this campaign in major European markets, particularly in the United Kingdom. In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, we see tourism not only as an economic activity but also as a bridge that introduces our culture to the world, builds connections among people, and strengthens friendships."

"We welcome more visitors than our population"

Governor of Istanbul Davut Gül said in his opening remarks: "Türkiye has made remarkable progress in tourism. Istanbul is one of the driving forces behind this success. We welcome more visitors than our population. As you all know very well, this is certainly not a coincidence. The contribution of Turkish Airlines, especially our airports, the promotional efforts of our Ministry, investments made by the sector, and our traditional hospitality in the service industry all reinforce one another. Equally important are the contributions of our district governors, governors, and local administrations, from the most remote parts of Anatolia to Istanbul, as well as the increasing number of geographically registered products and the competition among cities in the field of gastronomy tourism."

"If Istanbul grows stronger, the sector grows stronger. If the sector grows stronger, Türkiye's brand value grows stronger."

Deputy Chairman of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Council Gökhan Gümüşdağ said: "We view tourism not merely as 'promotion,' but as a matter of destination management in the true sense. Tourism is one of the strongest sectors of our country's economy. But for us, the success of tourism is not measured solely by numbers; it is measured by how it touches everyday urban life, how it benefits local tradespeople, and how it improves the quality of public spaces. While tourism generates income, it also places a burden on the city: transportation, cleaning, security, wayfinding, infrastructure, and the maintenance of public spaces. We are the ones managing the majority of this burden on the ground every single day. That is precisely why we need a fairer and more sustainable financing model. Let me express our clear demand from the field in one sentence: if the burden of tourism is local, then part of the resources should also remain local. In many tourism cities around the world, accommodation taxes are allocated to municipalities because the city provides cleaning, transportation, security, and wayfinding services used by tourists. We also request that a certain portion of the accommodation tax be allocated to metropolitan municipalities that bear the burden of tourism and that these resources be transparently invested in tourism services, ranging from cleaning and wayfinding to security, the quality of public spaces, and the preservation of heritage. This is a fair, sustainable model that also enhances service quality. We want Istanbul to grow, but not by placing a heavier burden on the city; rather, by making the city stronger. Because if Istanbul grows stronger, the sector grows stronger. If the sector grows stronger, Türkiye's brand value grows stronger."

"We have succeeded in positioning Türkiye as a country that plays a role in shaping global tourism policies"

Emphasizing that EMITT has become one of the world's leading tourism exhibitions by increasing its number of exhibitors and visitors every year while creating new business and cooperation opportunities for the sector, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) General Manager Sinan Seha Türkeven said: "In 2025, we exceeded our target of USD 64 billion set at the beginning of the year by achieving USD 65.2 billion in tourism revenue, reaching the highest figure in the history of the Republic. At the same time, we welcomed approximately 64 million visitors throughout the year, setting yet another record. Promotional activities played a significant role in achieving these successes. With the contributions of TGA,

we carried out advertising, promotion, marketing, and PR activities in more than 200 countries this year, delivering some of the world's most comprehensive and effective promotional campaigns. Beyond all these efforts, by focusing on a strategy of qualified tourism, we have succeeded in transforming Türkiye from a country merely trying to adapt to changing trends into one that actively plays a role in shaping global tourism policies. While we are pleased with the success achieved through all these efforts, we have already begun working towards the USD 68 billion tourism target for 2026 announced by our Minister just last week. I am confident that we will achieve this goal with the dedicated efforts of all our valued industry stakeholders. I believe that we will further strengthen our country's strong position in global tourism and achieve even greater success together. In this regard, major organizations such as EMITT, which serve as meeting points for industry representatives and provide an opportunity to share this vision for tourism, are of great importance to us."

"Our guests should leave our country carrying with them the sense of trust, sincerity, satisfaction, and quality they experienced here"

Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi said in his opening speech: "As Turkish Airlines, today we connect 132 countries across 6 continents through Istanbul. This connectivity offers tremendous opportunities for our country and the surrounding region. We carried 85 million passengers in 2024 and 92 million in 2025. Today, with our fleet of more than 520 aircraft, we continue to soar. Travelling to Istanbul from every corner of the world has never been easier throughout history. We regard our guests' flights as their first point of contact with our country. Through our 'Connect to Türkiye' events organized across different continents; we showcase the unique character of our country and invite guests to visit Türkiye. We serve the flavors of our cuisine on board and introduce Türkiye through our in-flight entertainment screens. We benefit from the expertise of our institutions, particularly the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, to further increase our contribution to the sector. In the Century of Türkiye, we say, 'Türkiye is growing, Turkish Airlines is flying higher.' This vision can only achieve its goals with the support of all our stakeholders. Today, tourism is no longer just about travel; it encompasses an end-to-end experience, from flight to passport control, from hotels to restaurants, from tour guides to shopkeepers, from taxi drivers to bus drivers. Every stakeholder has room to make further improvements. Our guests should leave our country carrying with them the sense of trust, sincerity, satisfaction, and quality they experienced here. Together, we will continue enriching this experience."

TÜRSAB supports the Island Cyprus Promotion Campaign

Beginning his speech with the words, "Exhibitions are platforms where stakeholders come together and commercial negotiations achieve their most meaningful outcomes," TÜRSAB Vice Chairman of the Board Davut Günaydın continued: "As TÜRSAB, we support the Island Cyprus Promotion Campaign, and within this scope, we are launching its promotional activities in Türkiye starting next week in Diyarbakır. After that, we will continue the campaign across many other parts of our country. Türkiye deserves not single-digit growth but double-digit growth. With all its attractions, tourism investments, and stakeholders, our country deserves double-digit growth. In this regard, the presence of travel agencies is a tremendous asset for Turkish tourism."

Istanbul rises to 20th place in the global congress rankings

Member of the Board of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce Bahadır Yaşık said: "As the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Development Education Foundation, we are working to bring international congresses to Istanbul. When our President took office in 2018, Istanbul ranked 133rd in the global congress rankings. According to the latest data announced for 2024, Istanbul has risen to 20th place in the world. In this respect, exhibitions such as EMITT have become even more valuable for us. In addition, in September we will host a total of 25,000 academic doctors at three congresses in Istanbul. Through these events, we aim to generate approximately USD 100 million in revenue. Furthermore, we will add an additional 40,000 square meters to Istanbul Expo Center, which we plan to put into operation within two years. This will transform it into one of the largest exhibition centers in the world, enabling us to host major exhibitions accommodating 15,000–20,000 people."

"We have entered a new strategic era where qualified relationships will be established"

President of the Turkish Hoteliers Federation (TÜROFED) Erkan Yağcı said in his speech: "Türkiye has become a country that welcomes more tourists than it sends abroad. As TÜROFED, together with all our Board members, we work tirelessly to contribute to this achievement for our country. We cooperate closely with the public sector while also working with other non-governmental organizations to resolve emerging issues in a timely manner. EMITT is an exhibition that has grown alongside the history of Turkish tourism, and today we are taking together the first step toward bringing it to an even better level through its renewed vision. At the same time, we have entered a new strategic era where qualified relationships will be established. Looking at the global scale, both Turkish tourism and world tourism are growing. At the same time, we have entered a period in which competition in tourism has become even more intense. Things will not become easier; they will become more challenging because we are operating in a fully competitive market. Therefore, we must work even harder. In order to sustain both the economic and intangible values we have achieved so far and ensure the sustainability of the sector, we must continue this success in tourism in the years ahead."

About ICA Events

By leveraging its strong global network in the exhibition industry, ICA Events, which organizes Türkiye's leading exhibitions in the construction, tourism, cosmetics, food, railway systems, and logistics sectors, transfers this strength to every industry it serves, creating new business, cooperation, and purchasing opportunities through its exhibitions while contributing to the development of these sectors.

About EMITT

EMITT – East Mediterranean International Tourism and Travel Exhibition has been inspiring tourism professionals for more than a quarter of a century as one of the global meeting points of the tourism industry. Bringing together nearly 30,000 tourism professionals each year with destinations and travel brands from around the world, EMITT offers visitors new routes and travel experiences. With more than 28 years of experience, EMITT has established itself as the leading exhibition in its region and continues to shape the industry while strengthening business partnerships through its ever-growing network of exhibitors and visitors. Organized in cooperation with ICA Group and TÜROFED, the exhibition is preparing to open its doors for the 29th time in 2026. EMITT serves as a business platform that enables exhibitors to connect with professional domestic and international visitors while creating new business and cooperation opportunities for the sector. Country pavilions, holiday destinations, summer and winter tourism and outdoor tourism destinations, health tourism, gastronomy tourism, hotels and tourist centers, tour operators, and travel agencies participate in the exhibition.

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