

OECD Istanbul Centre 2023 Achievements

The Inauguration of the OECD Istanbul Centre

29 March 2023 – The premises of the **OECD Istanbul Centre** were officially inaugurated on March 29, 2023, by OECD Secretary General **Mathias Cormann** and Turkish Minister of Trade **Mehmet Mus**. The OECD Istanbul Centre hosted this very high-level event with 76 participants, including 6 ambassadors from OECD Member states and 2 non-OECD states, 13 consul generals and chairmen from the prominent business associations in Türkiye. During his speech, the OECD Secretary General stated that the Istanbul Centre is a key hub for OECD's global engagement and he added: "as a founding member of the OECD, Türkiye has been a strong advocate for our instruments and policy best practices especially towards Southeastern Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East and North Africa region. The center will in particular connect regional programmes in Southeast Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, encouraging policy co-operation and dialogue among these regions".



Head of OECD Istanbul Centre Mr. Bouali / Ambassador Mr. Alkin/ ISO Chairman Mr. Bahcivan/ SG Mathias Cormann/ Minister of Trade Mehmet Mus/ TIM Chairman Mr. Gultepe/ Vice-Minister of Trade Mr. Tuzcu

The Secretary General stated the Istanbul Centre would "be a hub for our global engagement, connecting several important regions enabling mutual learning and enhancing our capacity building efforts".



Second Advisory Board

29 March 2023 - Following the visit of the Secretary General of the OECD, The Advisory Board convened under the co-chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Kerem Alkin, Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the OECD and Mr. Karim Dahou, Deputy Director of the OECD Global Relations and Co-operation Directorate, for the second time to discuss the Programme of Work of OECD Istanbul Centre for 2023 and

its goals for the future. The Board was held with the participation of the members of the Advisory Board, including H.E. Luca Niculescu, State Secretary of Romania, H.E. Régine Vandriessche, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the OECD and Chair of the External Relation Committee, Mr. Mustafa Tuzcu, Vice Minister, Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Achraf Bouali, Head of the OECD Istanbul Centre, Ms. Louisa Vinton, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), H.E. Ambassador Esen Altuğ, Director General of Multilateral Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hüsni Dilemre, Director General of International Agreements and European Union Affairs of the Ministry of Trade. During the AB, Head of OECD Istanbul Centre Mr. Achraf Bouali briefed the Board about the activities of the Centre since the effective start of its operations in June 2022 and presented the Programme of Work of the Centre for 2023. The Advisory Board welcomed the strong performance of the Centre and adopted Programme of Work 2023 with unanimity.

Cross-Regional Roundtable on Women's Entrepreneurship:

Putting Women at the Heart of Economic Recovery and Green Transition

28 March 2023 - The **Cross-Regional Roundtable on Women's Entrepreneurship** provided an opportunity for a cross-regional policy dialogue with the aim of exchanging policy experiences, guidelines, good practices, and other instruments to achieve gender equality in entrepreneurship for all the experts



from 25 different countries and numerous international organisations. The forthcoming conference proceedings provide an analysis of the challenges and opportunities for

developing women’s entrepreneurship across different regions and a summary of the roundtable discussions.



ITF Central Asia Regional Study Launch Event

5 April 2023 - The **ITF Central Asia Regional Study Launch Event** brought focal points from six Central Asian countries to have a roundtable discussion on various aspects related to transport connectivity

enhancement. During the event, the OECD Istanbul Centre together with GRC/EURASIA presented the preliminary findings of the ongoing Middle Corridor study.



Regional Circular Economy Project Kick-Off Event

10 April 2023 – The event hosted circular economy (CE) coordinators and focal points from the Western Balkans, OECD, and EU representatives to kick-start the ‘Supporting Green Transition through Circular Economy

roadmaps’ project which aims to establish regional network for CE peer learning and have a thematic CE policy discussion.

Roundtable on ‘Peace for Food’

8 May 2023 – The **Joint Business at OECD (BIAC)-OECD Istanbul Centre Event** discussed opportunities to promote more sustainable, productive, and resilient food systems with participants from BIAC members as well as partners, government representatives and OECD officials. Participants addressed recent challenges



around global food inflation as well as discussing sustainable and inclusive agriculture practices and mapping out the future course of joint work.



Green Action Task Force Forum

12 May 2023 – The Annual Meeting of the Green Action Task Force Forum was held at the OECD Istanbul Centre. Recent and upcoming activities on green finance and investment in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA) region were discussed at the forum with the participants from the countries of the region, the OECD

Member countries as well as partner organisations. Overall, the Forum focused on strengthening environmental revenue and expenditure accounting, reforming environmental taxes and charge systems and reviewing tax expenditures as well as providing legal and operational support to strengthening national funding entities.

Exhibition: ‘Building Bridges: International Collaboration for Gender Equality’

8 May – 8 August 2023 – The OECD Istanbul Centre opened the exhibition ‘Building Bridges: International Collaboration for Gender Equality’ at Odakule building, Istanbul. With the support from the OSG, the exhibition collected and showcases numerous OECD projects on gender equality and women’s economic empowerment.





Maghreb Banking Forum

19-20 May 2023 – The OECD Istanbul Centre was invited to the Maghreb Banking Forum, hosted in Istanbul and organised by the Maghreb Union of Banks. It gathered around 40 international experts and 50 participants from across the region to discuss about digital economy for the reconstruction of the Libyan economy.



Regional Seminar: Investment for Sustainable Development in MENA Region

19-20 June 2023 – The 'Investment for Sustainable Development in the MENA Region: Focusing on Incentives and Skills Development' seminar aimed to address the role of foreign investment (FDI) in revitalising post-crisis MENA economies. By focusing on incentives and skills development, it approaches enhancing

the positive impact of FDI in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Drawing on the OECD FDI Qualities Initiative, the event covered policies, data and green initiatives, quality jobs, skills development, gender equality and innovation.



SIPA (Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia) Summer School Programme

3-5 October 2023 – The 2023 Summer School Programme focused on sustainable infrastructure in Central Asia and Southeast Asia under the SIPA Project. As infrastructure contributes significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions, the event aimed to address the issue of aligning investment decisions with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. The OECD Sustainable Infrastructure

Programme in Asia (SIPA), supported by the Government of Germany, provided insights and tools for sustainable infrastructure development, targeting countries in Central and Southeast Asia. It focused on decarbonisation of transport and energy, bringing together policy makers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The programme included panel discussions, presentations and workshops covering topics such as decarbonising transport infrastructure, planning low-carbon transitions, and aligning project planning with net zero targets, and provided a platform for sharing experiences and disseminating knowledge on sustainable infrastructure planning and financing. The event concluded with a ceremony and awards.



Realising the Potential of the 'Middle Corridor'

Initial findings and recommendations

6 November 2023 - During the event, the initial findings and recommendations of the report "Realising the Potential of the Middle Corridor" prepared by OECD Istanbul Centre in cooperation with OECD EURASIA Programme were discussed. The

event, attended by government representatives, international organisations (e.g. World Bank, EBRD, International Transport Forum, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Union for the Mediterranean, etc.), private sector representatives and development partners from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Türkiye, served as a platform to refine and enrich the findings and recommendations of the report. Following the fruitful discussions held during the regional roundtable, the OECD Eurasia Week 2023 held in Paris on 13-14 December provided the opportunity to discuss and release the publication. The report, being the first of the connectivity projects of the Centre, looks at the Trans-Caspian International Trade Route, so called Middle Corridor's potential and at the challenges that must be overcome to realise it, drawing on the perspective of relevant private-sector actors in the four Middle Corridor countries. [Read the report.](#)

OECD Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) for MENA and Türkiye Programme

4-5 December 2023 - On 4-5 December 2023, the OECD Istanbul Centre hosted the “Responsible Business Conduct for Sustainable Development: Middle East, North Africa, and Türkiye” regional programme launch event in Istanbul. The initiative marks a key step towards strengthening the implementation of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye. The launch event sought to



identify step-changes in government and across companies to ensure responsible business conduct (RBC) becomes a reality. The event gathered representatives of governments, National Contact Points for RBC (NCPs), business associations, trade unions, civil society, and international organisations active on RBC in the five participating countries. It further signaled the closeknit cooperation between the OECD and the German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH (GIZ) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the programme funders, and partners from the region and beyond. Read the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct](#).

Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook 2024

13 December 2023 - The Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook 2024 is an integral part of the OECD Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe's efforts to cooperate with the economies of the region since 2000. Since then, a series of publications and meetings have provided valuable up-to-date information. Similarly, this meeting, organised and hosted by the OECD Istanbul Centre, marks the start of the 4th assessment cycle and focuses on the presentation and discussion of the first regional assessments and recommendations assessing economic performance, governance and regulation in six Western Balkan



economies in 15 key policy areas grouped into five thematic clusters: Business Environment, Skills, Greening, Digitalisation and Connectivity, and Infrastructure. This preliminary findings meeting provides an opportunity for key stakeholders, including coordinators of the OECD's work, representatives of the Statistical Office, ERP and IPA coordinators of the economy of the Western Balkan countries and representatives of the European Commission, RCC, CEFTA and the Transport Community, to participate in discussions and exchange ideas.