

## Prime Minister Erdoğan to open first ever World Economic Forum on Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia

1 June 2012

[Turkish translation](#) (PDF)

Maxwell Hall, Senior Media Manager, Media, Tel.: +41 (0)79 329 3500,  
E-mail: [maxwell.hall@weforum.org](mailto:maxwell.hall@weforum.org)

- More than 1,000 participants from business, civil society and government, including heads of state and government, will convene under the theme *Bridging Regions in Transformation*
- Eurozone crisis, Syria, youth unemployment and the aftermath of the Arab Spring to top the agenda
- More information about the World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia can be found at <http://www.weforum.org/eumena12>

**Istanbul, Turkey, 1 June 2012** – The World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia will open next week in Istanbul from 4 to 6 June 2012. Under the theme *Bridging Regions in Transformation*, the meeting will bring together more than 1,000 leaders from business, government, academia and civil society from over 70 nations. This will be the third World Economic Forum event in Turkey, an important gateway between Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. The meeting is being held with the support of the Government of Turkey.

The list of participants and programme were announced at a press conference in Istanbul today by **Egemen Bağış**, Minister for EU Affairs, Turkey; **Cuneyd Zapsu**, Chairman, Cuneyd Zapsu Danismanlik and former adviser to Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan; **Miroslav Dusek**, Director, Head of Middle East and North Africa, World Economic Forum; and **Stephen Kinno**ck, Director, Head of Europe, World Economic Forum.

This year's programme has been shaped around three core areas – growth and employment, technological and social change, and governance – with sessions addressing such pressing global issues as: geopolitics after the Arab Spring; the future of the Eurozone; the politics of austerity; jobs, growth and entrepreneurship; the future of Syria; G20 priorities for Russia; obstacles to economic diversification; the integration of civil society in political and economic reforms; trust between public and non-public actors; and Turkey's role in the region. This meeting reflects the intertwined destiny of the Middle East and North Africa, and Eurasia.

**Egemen Bağış** said that the Istanbul meeting is a unique opportunity for the global community of the World Economic Forum to build on Turkey's unique location:

"Our region faces a number of challenges today but also a huge opportunity to create a more stable, prosperous and secure future for our people. Turkey, as the second-fastest growing country of the G20 after China, is ready to play its part in this transition by acting as a responsible stakeholder and we are excited to be hosting this meeting of the World Economic Forum, which provides an excellent platform for the leaders in our region to convene, learn together and discuss change."

Commenting on the economic challenges Europe faces, **Stephen Kinno**ck said that he believed the meeting could foster collective growth by building new bridges between Europe and its neighbours:

"The Eurozone crisis goes far beyond its own borders: it is the single biggest threat to the global economy today. Any resolution will require concerted action by Europe's leaders that respects the interconnectedness of the entire region and helps the whole continent bring about meaningful change. As a bridge between Europe and emerging markets, and having emerged as a key political and economic influence on the global stage, Turkey is uniquely placed to help bring about this transformation."

**Miroslav Dusek** said that the meeting could not come at a more critical time for the Middle East and North Africa:

"We have a unique window of opportunity in some Middle East and North Africa countries where new parliaments are being empowered in a way that will really strengthen their societies. Looking 20 years ahead, we want to make sure that in 2012 in Istanbul we helped decision-makers across all levels of society put together a foundation for the whole region to emerge as one of the most stable, secure and prosperous regions in the world."

**Anastassia Aubakirova**, Head of Russia and CIS, World Economic Forum, said:

"The presence of so many leaders from Central Asia demonstrates how important this dialogue is for countries in transition and how the determination in finding solutions drives them to converge."

Heads of state and government from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine plus the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, and President of the Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation, are scheduled to participate in the meeting, as well as more than 50 senior government leaders and 150 chief executive officers from top global companies, representing over 30 countries worldwide.

The diversity of the region is reflected in the meeting's Co-Chairs:

- **Frederico Curado**, President and Chief Executive Officer, EMBRAER, Brazil
- **Ibrahim S. Dabdoub**, Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait
- **Ditlev Engel**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Vestas Wind Systems, Denmark
- **Muhtar A. Kent**, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, The Coca-Cola Company, USA
- **Andrey L. Kostin**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, VTB Bank, Russian Federation
- **Giuseppe Recchi**, Chairman, Eni, Italy
- **Güler Sabanci**, Chairman and Managing Director, Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding, Turkey

*Doğan TV Holding and Doğu Group are the co-host broadcasters for the 2012 World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia.*

## Notes to Editors

Follow the **World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia 2012** at <http://wef.ch/EUME12>

**Flickr Photos** from the event can be found at <http://wef.ch/eumepix>

Watch participants respond to **questions from the public** at <http://wef.ch/socialmediacorner> (hashtag **#WEFASK**)

Watch **live webcasts** of sessions at <http://wef.ch/live>

Follow the Forum on **Twitter** at <http://wef.ch/twitter> and <http://wef.ch/livetweet> (hashtag **#WEF**)

Follow tweets from participants on our **twitter list** at <http://twitter.com/davos/eumetweets>

Read the **Forum Blog** at <http://wef.ch/blog>

Become a fan of the Forum on **Facebook** at <http://wef.ch/facebook>

Follow the forum on **Google+** at <http://wef.ch/gplus>

Follow the Meeting on **iPhone** at <http://wef.ch/iPhone>

**Upcoming** Forum events at <http://wef.ch/events>

Subscribe to Forum **News Releases** at <http://wef.ch/news>

---

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Incorporated as a foundation in 1971 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Economic Forum is impartial and not-for-profit; it is tied to no political, partisan or national interests (<http://www.weforum.org>).



World Economic Forum, 91-93 route de la Capite, CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva  
Tel. +41 (0)22 869 1212, Fax +41 (0)22 786 2744, <http://www.weforum.org>