

Welcome from Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) - Director General, Institute of Export & International Trade



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The latest Doing Business Guide tackles a massive and fascinating market in Turkey, which, despite recent political uncertainty, remains one of the UK's top trading partners. Identified as one of the four MINT countries by economist Jim O'Neil, Turkey has long been one of the world's major emerging markets. With a population of just under 80 million people and a unique relationship with the EU, there are plenty of exporting opportunities for UK businesses.

As a transcontinental country straddling both Europe and Asia, Turkey has a great strategic location. Bordering the Black, Mediterranean, and Aegean Seas, Turkey lists Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Syria among its neighbours. Arabic is the official language and Islam its major religion, but Turkey culturally has a unique mix of Western modernism and Middle Eastern traditions. The UK is second only to Germany in terms of Turkey's largest trading partners, while Turkey is the EU's 4th largest export market and the 5th largest in terms of the provision of imports. Turkey's main exports and imports are in machinery, transport equipment and manufactured goods.

Turkey's relationship with the EU is unique and a constant topic of discussion. Joining the EU has been a longstanding ambition though talks have recently stalled due to the instability following the failed coup d'état in 2016. The EU and Turkey nonetheless remain linked by the Customs Union agreement that came into force at the end of 1995 – an agreement that was signed as a step towards the candidacy for joining the EU that it gained in 1999.

The Customs Union covers all industrial goods apart from agriculture (though processed agricultural products are included), services and public procurement. The union means that there is a common external tariff for products covered in the agreement and Turkey therefore aligns to EU law in several internal market areas including industrial standards.

Like most countries there is a healthy appetite for doing business in Turkey, and Turks value personal relationships with the people they do business with. Turks are generally very friendly and hospitable and will often be more than happy to conduct business meetings over a meal or drinks – good news considering the world-class reputation of their cuisine.

British companies have a reputation in Turkey for being risk-averse so it's key that you show willing and commitment to your potential Turkish partners. This means regular visits to the market are a must.

As always, we're more than happy to help you as you enter Turkey for the first time. Get in touch or become members if you'd like to gain the skills and knowledge needed to export to Turkey successfully.

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