

## Commemorating Turkish National Day

Written by Aykut Kumbaro?lu Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey

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29 October 2017 marks the 94th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. After a glorious victory against invading powers, the Republic of Turkey was established on the principle of “sovereignty belonged to the nation unconditionally”.

This day is remembered as the birth of modern Turkey. In the 94 years that followed, the vision brought forward by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk has revamped the entire fabric of the Turkish nation, transforming the country into a modern and progressive one. Today, Turkey, being a member of the G20 and pursuing full membership of the European Union, stands proud to be a secular democracy, a market economy supported by a dynamic private sector and a young population as well as the largest emerging donor country in comparison to her per capita income.

Turkey and Eritrea established diplomatic relations immediately after Eritrea gained independence. The Turkish Embassy in Asmara was opened four years ago in 2013. We share deep rooted historical, cultural and social ties. Upon this heritage, exchanges in many fields are expanding rapidly. I am very happy to see that our cooperation is being enhanced in many sectors and getting diversified. One of the most important among them is the increasing exchanges between our people. Within the framework of Türkiye scholarships, dozens of Eritrean students are continuing their university education in Turkey. Thousands of Eritreans are visiting Turkey every year thanks to direct flights by Turkish Airlines between Asmara- İstanbul.

Turkish Airlines is not only facilitating air transportation to and from Eritrea but also with 32

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African countries. These flights are promoting interactions between Turkey and the rest of the World. This is part of Turkey's strategy to share its experience with the Continent. I should underline that overall Turkish investment in Africa recently surpassed 6 billion USD. These investments are providing much needed jobs and infrastructure whilst assisting local economies and increasing the exports from host countries to third countries.

Before concluding, I would like to touch upon the heinous coup attempt that targeted Turkey more than a year ago on the 15th of July 2016. Gülenist Terror Organization (FETÖ) attempted to overthrow the Government, to assassinate the President and also bombed the Parliament. What happened that night was an attack on the Turkish state by traitors who infiltrated the Turkish military. Furthermore, 250 of our citizens were killed and more than 2000 were injured. All this sacrifice was not in vein. The Turkish nation defended democracy with courage and determination.

On this occasion, I would like to pay our utmost respect to our Great Leader and Founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and all the martyrs who fought and gave their lives for the independence and welfare of Turkey.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the city of Asmara for being listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. I am also happy to express that Turkey has given her full support for this project.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate, as the Ambassador of Turkey to Eritrea, my commitment to contribute to the further strengthening and development of the existing ties of friendship and cooperation between Turkey and Eritrea and I wish happiness and prosperity to the people of Eritrea.

Long live the Turkey-Eritrea friendship.