

UK-Turkey Race to Zero Summit: business leaders endorse climate action

With many events being organised worldwide ahead of the [COP26 in Glasgow](#) on 31 October – 12 November 2021, #RaceToZero is the largest global alliance racing to halve emissions by 2030.

On 8 July, the British Ambassador to Turkey, Sir Dominick Chilcott, chaired the virtual UK-Turkey Race to Zero Summit. The summit was organised in collaboration with the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD), and called the businesses to be a part of global action in achieving net-zero emission goals.

The event was one of the largest COP26 engagements in the region to date, with more than 270 participants from UK and Turkish businesses, institutions, and NGOs joining the 90-minute event, to discuss how businesses in the UK and in Turkey are combatting climate change and successfully making commercially viable commitments to net-zero emissions.

The event demonstrated the significant appetite for increasing ambition on corporate climate action in Turkey, which was endorsed by COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma, during his visit to Turkey in June this year.

Keynote speeches

The Rt Hon. Graham Stuart MP, Minister for Exports and Simone Kaslowski, President of TÜSİAD delivered keynote addresses. Minister Stuart called on businesses to set ambitious target to reach net-zero by 2050, and highlighted the importance of the UK and Turkey's role in driving global climate action, as G20 members.

Simone Kaslowski, President of TÜSİAD, used his keynote speech to echo Minister Stuart's call for businesses to deliver credible commitments to reach net-zero, and emphasised the importance of corporate climate targets in providing clarity and confidence to markets and investors.

Presentations

The event then moved to presentations from UK and Turkish companies, which showcased opportunities for private sector climate action, and industry best practice on achieving net-emissions.

The event saw presentations from Kürşat Apan (Supply Chain Director, Mey Diageo), Hakan Bulgurlu (CEO, Arçelik), Hasan Süel (External Affairs Director, Vodafone), and Haluk Kürkçü (CEO, Brisa).

Presenters highlighted their companies' strategies for climate change and

achieving net-zero emissions. They addressed the need to adopt a whole-of-supply chain approach to sustainable practices and manufacturing, as well as to catalyse effective ownership of the climate agenda across corporate leadership, in order to mobilise commitments from stakeholders and investors.

Panel discussion

The day concluded with a panel discussion on how businesses can take a lead in the Race to Zero, moderated by Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Turkey, Lord Janvrin. The panel included Enis Amasyalı (CEO, Borusan EnBW Enerji), and Rachael Everard (Head of Sustainability, Rolls Royce).

Panellists agreed on the need for businesses to accelerate their reduction of carbon emissions and climate resilience programmes, which has been put into focus through businesses' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They shared their experience in implementing net-zero targets across major corporate operations. Rachael Everard stressed that companies should use data to drive their climate change strategies and identify where net-zero targets can have the greatest impact.

The Race to Zero Summit closed with comments from Sir Dominick Chilcott KCMG (Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey), who called for businesses and organisation to make their pledge and join the Race to Zero, and thanked TÜSİAD and businesses for their climate leadership in Turkey.

Ahead of the UK's COP26 Presidency, the UK-Turkey Race to Zero Summit demonstrated the growing momentum and appetite for ambitious climate action throughout the private sector, and highlighted the power of effective public and private partnership.

The DIT and FCD0 Turkey network will continue engaging closely with businesses ahead of the COP26 Climate Summit in November, to ensure the growing momentum for corporate climate action is sustained.

The UK looks forward to continue working closely with Turkey, TÜSİAD and the Turkish business community through future activities on green finance, clean energy, and sustainable infrastructure, and towards achieving a mutually ambitious outcome at COP26.