



SUMMARY

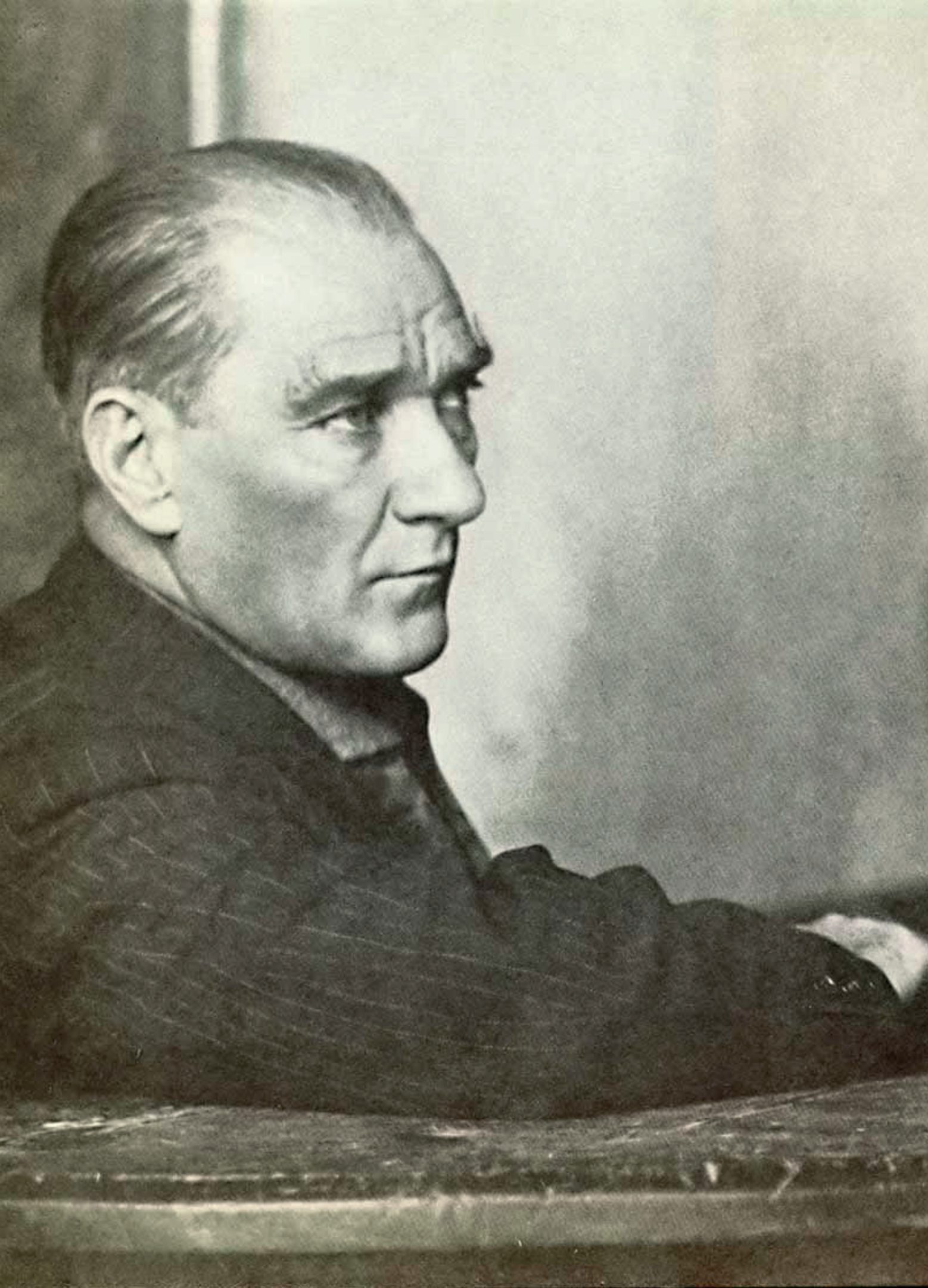
TR21 THRACE REGION REGION PLAN



2010-2013



TR21 THRACE REGION REGION PLAN
Tekirdağ, Edirne, Kırklareli 2010



According to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, the TR21 Thrace Region consists of Tekirdağ (TR211), Edirne (TR212) and Kırklareli (TR213) provinces. There are a total of 83 municipalities, 26 districts and 678 villages in the region. It has a total area of 18,665 km² (minus the lakes). Its population as of the year 2009 is 1,511,952.

The TR21 Thrace Region comprises the largest area of Turkey's land on the European continent. With such features, the region is virtually Turkey's door to Europe, serving as a platform for socio-economic relations and interactions with Europe.

The fact that all highways providing access to Europe from Turkey, and the existence of more and more energy transmission lines in this Region, add a strategic value to the TR21 Thrace Region.

In terms of demographics, having 2.4% of Turkey's total area, the TR21 Thrace Region had 2.7% of Turkey's population in the year 1965; whereas in the year 2009, this rate has dropped to 2.1%. The Region has a low population density in comparison to the rest of Turkey. Together with this, while the population density increases in regions where industry has developed as well as in the Ergene Basin, the population density decreases in the Western and Northern regions, where industry is less present.

The fact that the workforce supply is less than the demands of the industry has caused migration to other regions. Consequently, a population has formed in industrial areas such as Çorlu, Çerkezköy and Lüleburgaz, consisting of a variety of cultures from different regions. As a result of migrations due to employment opportunities created by the developing industry, in the 1995-2000 period, Tekirdağ was recorded as the province with the highest migration rate in Turkey, with 96.8%.

There are three main characteristics that can be presented in relation to social adaptation quality of the TR21 Thrace Region. The first one is that it has the border regions. The second is that it has various disadvantaged groups who face the economic and social integration problems of the Region. And third, its industrial areas has a high level of migrants. With respect to these three main characteristics, the development of the Region's social and humane structure, societal integration and solidarity must be priority.

Civil societal organizations in the Region, which are among the cornerstones of the social structure and have an important function of focusing on ensuring social integration, do not have relatively adequate capacity, means or expertise. For this reason, the inclusion of organized civil society in socio-economic and cultural life, for it to become more active and effective, are the main factors of ensuring the growth and development of the social structure.

Due to the current situation, the TR21 Thrace Region can be characterized as a region which has a variety of efficiencies and potential in terms of its educational infrastructure. However, when it comes to the development of the educational infrastructure, it is important to focus on measures which need to be taken to ensure the access of especially disadvantaged groups to these services, to meet professional development needs in education and to improve basic facilities that are overloaded due to migration.

The TR21 Thrace Region's health infrastructure does not carry homogenous features throughout the region. In terms of health infrastructure related data, the Edirne and Kırklareli provinces have values higher than Turkey's average; whereas the Tekirdağ province presents the need for steps to be taken towards improving its health infrastructure. Together with this, the constant and easy access of disadvantaged groups to health care services is of highest priority.

When the employment structure is examined, it can be noted that structural changes have been taking place in recent years within the Region. The agricultural employment rate in the TR21 Thrace Region was recorded to be 34.2% in 2004; however, this rate dropped to 20.2% in the year 2008. The declining share of employment in agriculture has resulted in an increase in the industry and service sector. Unemployment, especially in recent years, has become one of the most important problems of the TR21 Thrace Region. Although long-term unemployment rates are presenting a declining trend for years in Turkey, it is steadily increasing for the TR21 Thrace Region. The increase rate of unemployment in the region, especially in the last three years, has risen over the national average.

The fact that the industrial area is mainly located in the surrounding areas of the D-100 highway, starting from Çorlu and Çerkezköy and stretching out until Muratlı and Lüleburgaz and that agricultural production



continues by maintaining its importance in areas apart from those indicated, has resulted in the formation of a dual, heterogeneous, socio-economic structure in the Region.

According to the "Study of the Socio-Economic Development Ranking of Provinces and Regions" carried out by the State Planning Organization in the year 2003, the TR21 Thrace Region is one which holds a second rank position in terms of development. In terms of factors which determine the competitive advantage of a region, the TR21 Thrace Region has a variety of superior qualities in terms of its strong transport, energy, communications and logistics infrastructures. However, the infrastructural factors that are in question do not present a homogeneous distribution throughout the Region. While the section located between the Çerkezköy, Çorlu and Lüleburgaz provinces presents a strong infrastructural opportunity, the organized and other industrial areas located within the Western and Northern axis are in need of improvement, especially in terms of transport, energy and refinery infrastructures.

Along with this, there is also a significant difference between the competitive levels of the provinces. While it is observed that the increase in industry has been a determining factor in Tekirdağ's development; in the case of Edirne, although it is relatively on top of the list in the ranks of general development, it is observed that sectors outside of industry are more determining.

Along with the significant potential that Tekirdağ holds in terms of trade and manufacturing, it lies in the bottom ranks in terms of workforce. On the other hand, Edirne and Kırklareli provinces hold a relatively better position in terms of workforce.

When the economy of the region is analyzed in general, it is observed that the share of agriculture in the income generated in 2006 was 12.5%, the share of industry was 34% and the share of the service sector was 53.5%. Above Turkey's average in agricultural and industrial production, the Region holds its position at the bottom with a 10% rate in the service sector. Agricultural production revenue was stable in the 2004-2006 period, while income from industry rose 46% and the service sector demonstrated a 50% increase.

The economic crisis both in Turkey and the rest of the world - when compared to other regions - has affected the TR21 Thrace Region in a particularly negative way. Hence, the increase in the Region's unemployment rate during the latest global economic crisis as well as the increase in the number of businesses closing down, were all above Turkey's average.

Along with this, the fall in revenue obtained from agriculture, and livestock, the drop in the number of agricultural labor force, especially young laborers, the fact that the needs of the agriculture-based industry is unable to meet its raw material needs with that produced within the Region, are just a few of the causes of the macro-economic instabilities experienced in the Region.

When the magnitude and sufficiency of public investments in the Region are examined, it can be observed that the Region is not benefiting from investments as much as its contribution to the national income. In terms of private domestic and foreign investments, the TR21 Thrace Region is the center of attraction due to its geographical location and close proximity to a metropolis and trade center, Istanbul. However, despite its geographical and logistic superiorities, factors such as shortages in physical and social infrastructures and not benefiting enough from investment incentives, limits the investments the Region is able to attract.

Throughout the Region, especially in the agriculture-based industry, an investment potential is attracting attention, and it is followed by the clothing industry, machine industry and electrical-electronic industry. In this respect, it can be said that the textile, food and leather processing sectors are prominent industries. Furthermore, in terms of agriculture and agriculture-based industry, the Region is home to a natural conglomerate. Important agricultural products of the Region such as wheat, sunflower, paddy, and milk alternative flour and flour-based products, oil, rice and dairy products industries have developed. When the business structure in the TR21 Thrace Region is examined, it is clear that the competitive strength of SMEs are not at a sufficient level. At this point, institutionalization, productivity and innovation offers a vital opportunity for SMEs to increase their competitive strength.

Another fundamental problem of the Region's businesses (agricultural and industrial) is the lack of

branding. One of the most important measures which will ensure the increase of competitive strength of a business at a national and international level is increasing the speed of branding operations. Accordingly, a business structure which is environmentally conscious, uses advanced technology and carries out high added-value production is a priority target for the Region.

When agricultural production is studied, however, depending on the climate and soil conditions, or the development of watering facilities, it can be derived that the Region can enable all sorts of agricultural operations to take place. In the current situation, more than half of the country's sunflower and paddy production is met by the TR21 Thrace Region. It also attracts attention with its high yield in wheat production - a strategic product. Steering towards diversity with high added value products offers an important potential for improving the income level of the Region's producers.

The TR21 Thrace Region is of particular importance for Turkey when it comes to cattle breeding. As a result of artificial insemination applied successfully for many years in the Region, significant advancements have been recorded in the existence of cattle in terms of genotype features, and the rate of cultured breeds and cultured crossbreeds is higher than the total existing livestock. Consequently, the Region is considered to be an area which features as Turkey's breeding warehouse.

When the Region's agricultural production is examined, it is observed that family businesses which employ family members without payment, are small, carry out semi-subsistence and plant and animal mixed production are predominant. Soil cultivation, watering and other basic agricultural applications in multiple and small parcel farm lands are falling short and this situation is causing the income of Region producers, especially those carrying out dry farming, to be very low. Along with the fact that the number of agricultural cooperatives and unions are quite high, their institutionalization levels require to be developed in order for these producing organizations to become more effective in terms of functionality.

In terms of the service sector, another field in economic activities, the Region presents a significant potential. It can be observed that the Region is especially very open to development in the fields of culture-tourism and logistics. That is to say, with its cultural

diversity, historical richness and natural beauties, the TR21 Thrace Region offers suitable conditions in the field of culture and tourism for culture tours, nature sports, sea tourism, agrotourism, enotourism and the like. Also, parallel to its potential of becoming a logistical center, the TR21 Thrace Region is a transition zone where various transport modes intercept. It's close proximity to Istanbul presents an important advantage in terms of the Region serving as a logistical base.

Increasing the efficiency of energy use and promoting the widespread use of renewable energy resources in the TR21 Thrace Region is a vital necessity. Of the renewable energy resources, the potential of wind power is exceptionally high. In terms of natural underground resources, lignite, manganese and natural gas come to the fore. The high quality lignite reserves in the Region are of a quality which can contribute to energy development.

Protection of the environment and natural resources compose one of the most important items of agenda for the TR21 Thrace Region. The unplanned industrialization experienced after 1980 caused environmental issues and due to the current situation, the structure in question has become ecologically unsustainable. The most important environmental issues of the Region are water pollution, air pollution and waste management, respectively.

This being said, overcoming deficiencies in infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants in cities and industrial areas, solid waste storage and disposal facilities as well as promoting sustainable agricultural applications which use water resources in an economic manner and have high environmental awareness, are essential. Moreover, decreasing energy demands by means of increasing energy efficiency, making sure at the same time to improve energy production systems which make use of the potency of renewable energy resources in the area is also essential.

In the future, the agriculture and industry sectors will cease to be entities hindering each other and will rather become an operational alliance resulting in entering an environmentally conscious, sustainable development process. Besides this, as a result of the current potential within the Region being actualized, the culture-tourism and logistics sectors - one of the development locomotives of the Region - will also come to the fore together with the agriculture and industry sectors.

For these predictions to be realized, effective and applicable plans must be carried out concerning the Region. Effective management of the coordination of all relevant agents in relation to water resources, effective and complementary planning of housing and tourism related land use and effective practice of agricultural product planning are all prominent requirements in achieving sustainable development. In terms of spatial development scenarios, while the east part of the Region may be regarded as an area of industry and service, the west can be characterized with its productive soil. Therefore, it is possible to create its future development plan based on the conservation areas located in the North and Southwest parts of the Region, as well as the development areas situated in the center.

Specializations in functions of service is recommended for the Tekirdağ, Kırklareli, Çorlu, Lüleburgaz and Keşan settlements, based on various criteria. Along with this, it is predicted that Çerkezköy will become the industrial center of the Region. Also, areas of settlement that are rich in terms of natural and cultural assets, namely Edirne, are predicted to become cultural-tourism centers.

In connection with the current situation that has been attempted to be summarized above, as a result of focus group meetings, face-to-face meetings and surveys that have been carried out with Region stakeholders, the Region Plan Strategy has been built on four main points.

These are; increasing competitive capability, ensuring a calculated development of infrastructure, ensuring environmental sustainability, improving social structure and labor force.