

AIDE MEMOIRE

TÜRKİYE’S CANDIDATURE FOR THE 2026-2027 IMO COUNCIL UNDER CATEGORY “C”

Candidacy

The Government of the Republic of Türkiye is seeking re-election to the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) under Category “C” at the election to be held during the 34th Regular Session of the IMO Assembly in London from 24 November-03 December 2025.

Geopolitics

Türkiye, located at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, is surrounded by the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea with a coastline of 10,940 kilometers.

The Turkish Straits, which consist of the Strait of Istanbul, the Strait of Çanakkale and the Sea of Marmara connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea as well as the two continents, are known as one of the most geostrategically located system of waterways in the world. The Straits are the main trading route linking the Black Sea Littoral States to the world markets.

Due to this strategic location, Türkiye is an important junction point for international trade routes. Turkish ports, which has the capacity of handling different types of cargo and various size of vessels with their modern equipment, serve as a transshipment hub for both her region and the world.

Maritime Interest

As a country with deep-rooted maritime tradition, Türkiye has always had a profound interest in maritime transport and navigation. Shipping plays a vital role in Türkiye’s economy. Nearly 90% of the volume of her foreign trade in goods is transported by sea. Therefore, Türkiye believes that sustainable development of the sector is indispensable for her economic growth and attaches utmost importance to the green transition and the development of a sustainable maritime economy in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the targets of IMO.

Being involved in almost every facet of the maritime industry, from shipbuilding, ship repair, ship recycling and related sub-industries to ship and port operations, training of seafarers for the global industry, ship classification, marine insurance and maritime logistics, Türkiye has a very dynamic and ever-growing maritime sector.

Merchant fleet: As an important Flag State, Türkiye has a merchant fleet of 2171 vessels over 150 GT and totaling around 7.1 million DWT as of the end of 2024.

The Turkish flag has been on the White Lists of major PSC regimes such as Paris and Tokyo MoUs thanks to the high performance of her merchant fleet. Moreover, Türkiye prioritizes enhancing the quality and efficiency of Port State Controls as an active member of the Mediterranean MoU since 1998 and the Black Sea MoU since 2000.

Shipbuilding: As being one of the most promising sectors in Türkiye, the industry has modern and quality-certified shipyards, where all types of vessels, from specially designed wooden ships to state-of-the-art ships, such as chemical tankers, military ships, fishing vessels, research vessels, tugs, mega-yachts, supply vessels, offshore boats, and container ships are built. Besides, extensive repair, conversion and retrofit works are carried out in Turkish shipyards.

In line with the current trends in the sector, Türkiye is one of the leading countries in the construction of autonomous and unmanned ships, including the LNG-powered autonomous tugboat and all-electric ferry and the 100% LNG fish-feeding barge, as well as vessels with the fuel of LNG, hybrid or full electrical battery systems. The sector attaches utmost importance to research and development (R&D) investments in green shipping and develops projects on the construction of ships using alternative fuels such as methanol.

As of the end of 2024, the industry's shipbuilding capacity has reached 4.79 million DWT, and the repair/maintenance capacity has been 41 million DWT. In addition, Türkiye is one of the important marine equipment providers in the global maritime sector.

Türkiye also has a highly competitive yacht-building industry, which has become a world trademark. Türkiye is among the top three countries in the world for superyacht building.

Ship recycling: As being one of the five major ship recycling countries in the world with her internationally recognized and environmentally sound ship recycling facilities, Türkiye offers environmentally friendly ship recycling in compliance with the provisions of the Hong Kong Convention. The capacity of ship recycling facilities has reached 1 million LDT/year as of the end of 2024.

Seafarers: As an important seafaring nation, more than 140,000 Turkish seafarers serve the global shipping sector. With a view to enhancing maritime culture, promotion of amateur sailing is also one of the priorities of Türkiye. Since seafarers are indispensable to the shipping industry, their safety and well-being are of paramount importance to Türkiye, especially in the face of the evolving challenges of the global landscape.

Recognizing critical role of seafarers, Türkiye remains committed to ensuring a supportive and safe environment for all seafarers to address their needs and concerns effectively.

Marine tourism: Türkiye is one of the most popular marine tourism destinations in the world with her modern cruise terminals and marinas, famous bays for yachting and diving.

Fishing: Fishing is another industry that has gained vital impetus in recent years. As a result, Türkiye has become one of the major exporters of fish and fishery products. Türkiye closely follows the work on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and is among one of the Member States representing IMO in the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on IUU Fishing and Related Matters meetings.

Marine insurance: Türk P&I provides 24/7 and worldwide service through its 370 international correspondents over 145 countries across the world.

Classification services of ships: Türkiye has vast experience in ship classification. Turkish Classification Society, Türk Loydu, is an independent, impartial, reliable and specialized

international “Classification, Certification and Conformity Assessment Body”. It provides certification services for ships, as well as offshore platforms and yachts. Türk Loydu, as an IACS Member, is one of the classification societies authorized by IMO for compliance of its construction rules for bulk carriers and oil tankers with the international goal-based shipbuilding standards.

Maritime research activities: Türkiye attaches great importance to maritime research activities and invests in knowledge. National research institutions carry out comprehensive maritime research activities, not only in maritime jurisdiction areas of Türkiye, but also in the Arctic Ocean and Antarctica. Earth and Marine Science Institute (EMSI) and Polar Research Institute (PRI), both under Marmara Research Center (MRC) of The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TUBİTAK), National Centre for the Sea and Maritime Law (DEHUKAM), Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences (METU IMS), Istanbul University Institute of Marine Science and Management (IU-IMSM) Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Marine Science and Technology (DEU-IMST), Istanbul Technical University Eastern Mediterranean Centre for Oceanography and Limnology (EMCOL) and Mediterranean Fisheries Research, Production and Training Institute (AKSAM) are among the prominent research institutions.

Commitment to IMO

Türkiye is a founding member of IMO and her commitment to the Organization is long-standing. She has been a member of IMO Council since 1999. Due to her strong belief in the mission and vision of the Organization, Türkiye actively participates in the work of the Organization.

Being party to the most of IMO Conventions and Protocols, Türkiye effectively implements and enforces the provisions of international maritime legislation. Türkiye completed a successful audit under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) in September 2024 which proved her commitment to the objectives of the Organization.

As a dedicated member, Türkiye is a keen supporter of IMO in meeting the challenges facing the global shipping industry, such as climate change, emerging technologies, safety and wellbeing of seafarers, and empowerment of women for a sustainable global maritime industry.

Besides, Türkiye provides auditors for IMSAS and actively contributes to the work for the effective implementation and improvement of the audit scheme.

As an active and cooperative member of the Council, Türkiye advocates common interests of all Member States. In parallel with the regulatory work on technical issues, Türkiye supports IMO’s work on administrative and organizational reforms within the Council as well as the initiatives to strengthen transparency, enhance multilingualism, empower women, and improve the GISIS system to achieve IMO’s goals and objectives.

Protection of the Marine Environment and Prevention of Pollution from Ships

Reduction of GHG emissions from shipping

It is well-known that international shipping has a critical role in supporting the continued development of global trade and supply chains. However, it also has a critical impact on the environment, which requires global cooperation and concerted action in the fight against climate change.

As a country with a net-zero emission target for 2053, Türkiye updated her Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2023 from a 21 % reduction to a 41% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to business-as-usual. Within IMO, Türkiye also upholds all efforts by adopting and implementing the regulations developed by the Organization in this regard.

Türkiye has played an active role in the finalization and adoption of the IMO Strategy for the Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, participated in the work of the “Working Group on Comprehensive Impact Assessment of the Basket of Candidate Mid-Term Measures”, and continues to make significant contributions to the development of mid-term and long-term measures.

Furthermore, Türkiye played an important role in designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides by MEPC 79, in order to ensure reduction of emissions from ships, providing substantial benefits to large segments of the population and to the marine and land ecosystems of the region.

Türkiye supports the green transformation of her maritime sector. In this regard, a financial support mechanism is introduced for the renewal of the ships almost completing their life cycle by using green technologies. Moreover, the “Maritime Decarbonization and Green Shipping Program” was initiated in coordination with the European Union to provide financial support for the build-out of new green ships and retrofitting of the existing ones as well as the establishment of green infrastructure for the port facilities.

The “Green Ports” project, which was updated in November 2023, aims to promote environmentally friendly port operations and requires the calculation and verification of GHG emissions in port facilities.

Under the IMO GreenVoyage2050 initiative, Türkiye carries out a pilot project on “feasibility study for electrification of ferry and terminal services within the Sea of Marmara”.

Protection of the marine environment

For the protection of the environment from shipping, Türkiye effectively implements the related international regulations such as the MARPOL, HNS, BWM and Barcelona Conventions and heavily invests in this area.

Within this framework, the National Maritime Safety Center (UDEM) established in 2019 is designed as a regional center to improve maritime safety, respond oil spills and HNS pollution. The campus of the center provides service for safety of navigation, monitoring, and

modelling activities. The center has the capacity for countering large ship-sourced or land-based oil spills that might occur after major accidents or disasters as well. The center is also designed to provide trainings in accordance with the Model Courses of IMO, IALA, OPRC and HNS. Model course training is carried out using realistic practical applications.

As another effort to protect the marine environment, a study for risk assessment of sensitive sea and coastal areas of Türkiye against pollution was performed. Emergency Response Plans against marine pollution have been in force for coastal facilities since 2010. Türkiye monitors pollution in her maritime jurisdiction areas via satellites, sensors and other means. Furthermore, effective inspections are carried out in Turkish ports against marine and air pollution from ships.

Türkiye is one of the initiator countries for the ballast water management activities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions, actively promoting solutions for ballast water management systems. Inspections in Turkish ports have continued to be carried out meticulously, especially after the obligation to have ballast water treatment systems on ships as of September 8, 2024. Türkiye is closely following the discussions at IMO regarding the Convention and its effective implementation in Turkish ports.

Marine litter

Being aware of the devastating impact of marine litter on the environment, Türkiye continues its efforts to prevent both land-based and ship-sourced marine litter in line with the MARPOL 73/78 Convention, the Basel Convention, the Barcelona Convention and the Bucharest Convention. In order to combat marine litter, Türkiye launched the Zero Waste Blue Initiative and prepared provincial action plans on marine litter.

Safety of Navigation

Turkish Straits are among the world's busiest shipping lanes with an average of 40,000 passages per year. As global economic activity expands and technological advancements surge, both the number and size of ships passing through the straits are increasing. The transportation of hazardous cargo, such as petroleum and liquefied gas, further heightens the risks to the safety of navigation.

In order to ensure safety of navigation through the Turkish Straits, the "Turkish Straits Vessel Traffic Services" (TSVTSs) system was established and has been functioning effectively since 2003. The Vessel Traffic Services (VTSs) are also introduced in major ports covering around 90% of the international shipping traffic in her waters.

All vessel traffic monitoring and management systems, including National Automatic Identification System (AIS) and National Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) are integrated to national "Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System", which has been operational since 2019.

To address the threat posed by drifting mines that have been endangering maritime traffic in the Black Sea, the "Trilateral Initiative" was launched with Romania and Bulgaria under the leadership of Türkiye. Under the Initiative, the Mine Countermeasures Black Sea (MCM BLACK SEA) Task Group was established in January 2024 to ensure the navigational safety against the mine threat in the Black Sea.

Maritime Security

Attaching great importance to maritime security, particularly in countering unlawful acts at sea, Türkiye is among the first Member States, which signed the Protocol of 2005 to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation and the Protocol of 2005 to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf.

As a Port State, Türkiye has been successfully implementing the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). Türkiye also contributes to multilateral efforts and initiatives in the field of maritime security through additional surveillance operations of the Turkish Naval Forces and the Turkish Coast Guard Command.

Search & Rescue

Türkiye's experience in SAR activities dates back to shore-based rescue service stations established in 1856, which were one of the first of their kind in the region.

The Main Search and Rescue Coordination Center (MSRCC) Ankara is the contact point for search and rescue operations. MSRCC Ankara coordinated 452 SAR operations and 922 lives were saved at sea as of the end of 2024.

Türkiye is associated with the COSPAS-SARSAT Programme as a ground segment provider as of June 11, 2005. The Turkish Mission Control Center (TRMCC) assumed the responsibility for Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgia and Ukraine as her SAR Point of Contacts (SPOC's).

Turkish MEO (Medium Earth Orbit) System is constantly on service on six MEO channels. Furthermore, Türkiye participated in several international tests to contribute to the development of the future MEOSAR system. In this context, Türkiye is one of the four countries all over the world that installed the Beacon Simulator. Additionally, the COSPAS-SARSAT System Ankara MEOSAR Reference Beacon has been operational since December 2020.

Marine Safety Investigation

Marine safety investigations are carried out by the Transport Safety Investigation Center of Türkiye with a systematic approach to enhance maritime safety and prevent the recurrence of similar accidents in the future with the lessons learned from these investigations. The Center also contributes to the marine safety investigations of other countries when Türkiye is the substantially interested State.

Maritime Education

Türkiye is one of the leading seafaring nations, whose competence is recognized by 38 countries under the STCW I/10 Protocol and placed on the White List of the STCW Convention.

Türkiye meets the requirements of the Manila Amendments to the STCW Convention and Code with her accredited maritime institutions including faculties, high schools and private courses. Türkiye has 105 authorized maritime training institutions, which include 29 universities, 45 maritime colleges, and 31 private maritime training courses.

The "Seafarers Information System" was renewed in 2022, allowing for greater transparency in monitoring seafarers' training and certification processing. For tracking of mandatory training attendance in Turkish private educational institutions, an "Electronic Card Verification System" has been introduced in 2023.

Beside the training for officers and ratings of commercial vessels, Türkiye provides training for fishermen, divers, boat skippers and maritime pilots in accordance with the relevant international regulations.

Gender Equality

Türkiye promotes gender equality and barrier-free working environment for women in the maritime sector. In this context, Türkiye actively participates in IMO's works for gender equality including the adoption of the IMO Gender Equality Award. As an active member of the IMO Gender Network (IMOGEN) program, Türkiye provides mentorship to female students at the World Maritime University (WMU) and the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI).

At national level, a protocol was signed with the national stakeholders on March 8, 2021 to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the maritime sector. The protocol provides for positive discrimination for female cadets in their mandatory on-board training.

Türkiye has taken several important legal, regulatory, and institutional steps to address and combat violence and harassment on board ships, including sexual harassment, bullying, and sexual assault by seafarers.

Facilitation of International Maritime Trade

On 1 July 2018, Türkiye installed her National Maritime Single Window System, which has become mandatory for all Member States as of 1 January 2024 in accordance with the provisions of the FAL Convention. All relevant public authorities, which are involved in the clearance procedure of ships, cargo, crew and passengers are integrated into the system. Türkiye shares her experience and knowledge on the system and is ready to cooperate with interested Member States in this regard.

Digitalization and technological advancements are transforming the maritime industry by enhancing efficiency, safety, and sustainability in operations. Türkiye actively participates in both technical and regulatory works of the MASS Working Group, supports the development of the draft non-mandatory MASS Code and contributes to IMO activities in line with this draft Code.

Türkiye has played an active role in addressing common issues identified by the regulatory scoping exercises for using MASS conducted by the MSC, LEG, and FAL Committees and volunteered to co-lead the development of the section related to radiocommunications of the draft MASS Code.

Cybersecurity is essential for building a resilient, green, and digital maritime industry. Türkiye attaches utmost importance to maritime cyber risk management to safeguard her shipping sector from the current and emerging cyber threats, and vulnerabilities and actively participates in the work, especially under MSC, regarding the next steps to enhance maritime cybersecurity.

Technical Cooperation

With a view to serving the global maritime community, Türkiye shares her expertise and experience with the Member States, through technical assistance, trainings and bilateral cooperation.

Türkiye hosts regional technical cooperation activities of IMO and provides experts and training facilities for such events. The recent activities include the regional training course for Port Facility Security Auditors for North Africa and Middle East as part of the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Program (ITCP), which was held in İstanbul in September 2024 and the in-person part of the IMO Regional train-the-trainer workshop for seafarers on ships operating in polar waters which was held in İzmir in October 2022. Türkiye will also host an IMO training activity on Regional Program for VTS instructor training for the Red Sea Area countries in 2025.

Vote for Türkiye

In line with the foregoing, the Government of the Republic of Türkiye believes that her re-election to the Council will further contribute to the efforts to achieve the objectives of IMO and seeks the invaluable support of Member States in the election to be held during the 34th regular session of the IMO Assembly.