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June 2026 • Issue: 7

Istanbul Textile and Apparel Exporters' Associations



TEXHIBITION

ISTANBUL

**RETURNS WITH
A STRONGER
VISION FOR ITS
10TH EDITION**

**THE FUTURE OF
INNOVATIVE TEXTILES IS
BEING ENGINEERED IN
TÜRKİYE**



**COUNTDOWN
TO THE 10TH**

IFCO  **ISTANBUL
FASHION
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HAT BASKI SANATLARI

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ÖZGÜR MASUR BRINGS ANATOLIAN HERITAGE TO A ROYAL AUDIENCE

Created for the centennial of the Republic of Türkiye, Özgür Masur's Anatolia collection was presented to Queen Mathilde of Belgium, bringing Türkiye's textile heritage into a contemporary royal dialogue.

During her May visit to Türkiye, Emine Erdoğan, wife of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, hosted Queen Mathilde at the historic Dolmabahçe Palace, where cultural heritage and contemporary craftsmanship converged in a highly symbolic setting.

As part of the visit, Emine Erdoğan and Queen Mathilde toured Asırlık Zarafet (Century-Old Elegance), an exhibition curated by the Olgunlaşma Institute that reinterprets Türkiye's

inherited cultural legacy as a dynamic force shaping the future. The exhibition highlighted the country's artisanal traditions through textile craftsmanship, with a particular emphasis on weaving techniques that reflect the richness of Türkiye's cultural memory.

During the visit, Emine Erdoğan presented Queen Mathilde with a handcrafted brooch created by artisans of the Olgunlaşma Institute, employing traditional Turkish iğne oyası (needle lace) and embroidery techniques. Adorned with honeysuckle, chrysanthemum, and tulip motifs, the brooch was meticulously crafted over the course of a week, reflecting the richness of Türkiye's cultural heritage and the enduring excellence of its artisanal craftsmanship.

Also presented to Queen Mathilde was Turkish designer Özgür Masur's Anatolia collection, created to mark the centennial of the Republic of Türkiye. By reinterpreting Anatolia's cultural heritage through a contemporary design lens, the collection garnered considerable appreciation and harmonized seamlessly with the event's culturally rich and meaningful setting.

Developed following a three-year research process conducted across women's institutes in Anatolia, the 100-piece collection reinterprets the region's distinctive textile techniques and indigenous fabrics through a modern fashion vocabulary. Blending craftsmanship, memory and innovation, Anatolia reflects a broader movement within Turkish fashion toward preserving cultural identity while translating it for a global contemporary audience.



DICE KAYEK COLLECTIONS ENTER THE WORLD'S LEADING MUSEUMS

From Paris to New York, Dice Kayek's sculptural creations are extending their influence far beyond the runway, becoming part of the permanent collections of leading museums worldwide. This remarkable achievement further cements the place of Turkish design within the global cultural and artistic landscape.

Selected archival pieces from the house have been inducted into the permanent collections of leading cultural institutions across a geography stretching from the United States to Russia, and from France to the United Kingdom—underscoring the enduring artistic relevance of Turkish fashion on the international stage. What began with Dice Kayek's recognition through the Jameel Prize at the Victoria and Albert Museum has, by 2026, evolved into a form of global cultural diplomacy. The brand has donated a selection of singular, one-of-a-kind archival pieces to some of the world's foremost institutions, including the Denver Art Museum, The Museum at FIT, Palais Galliera and the Hermitage Museum, further elevating the

global visibility of Turkish design excellence.

At the Denver Art Museum, Dice Kayek's creations are currently featured alongside works by the legendary couturière Madame Grès in the exhibition *Conversation Pieces: Stories from the Fashion Archives*, which opened in February. Four sculptural silhouettes from the brand's acclaimed Istanbul Contrast collection are presented in dialogue with iconic designs by Coco Chanel, Alexander McQueen, and the historic House of Worth, affirming their significance within the global fashion narrative. The pieces have also secured a place in the museum's permanent fashion collection, underscoring the enduring influence and artistic value of the brand's design legacy.

In Paris, two of fashion's most influential institutions—Palais Galliera and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs—have added six Dice Kayek silhouettes to their collections. The latter has catalogued a curated selection of pieces, including iconic looks from Turkish Delight and Istanbul by Night, reinforcing the maison's dialogue between heritage craftsmanship and contemporary couture language. Meanwhile, The Museum at FIT has introduced a standout couture piece from the brand to American audiences, further consolidating Dice Kayek's presence within the canon of international fashion history. In Saint Petersburg, the Hermitage Museum has welcomed four signature Topkapı designs from the Istanbul Contrast collection into its permanent holdings—pieces that evoke the grandeur of Ottoman aesthetics through Dice Kayek's distinctive sculptural vocabulary.



NEW TAX PACKAGE SET TO RESHAPE TÜRKİYE'S INVESTMENT LANDSCAPE

A newly announced tax reform package unveiled by Türkiye's President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, under the "Türkiye Century: Strong Investment Hub Programme" is poised to strengthen the country's appeal to exporters, global capital and financial services players. By introducing incentives aimed at export-oriented manufacturing, international investment, and capital markets, the package reflects a strategic effort to strengthen Türkiye's position as a leading regional hub for business, trade, and investment.

Under the proposed regulation, the corporate tax rate—currently set at 20%—will be reduced to 9% for manufacturing exporters and to 14% for other export-oriented companies. The move is designed to reinforce Türkiye's export competitiveness while supporting high-value production and industrial investment.

Istanbul Financial Centre Gains Expanded Incentives

Companies operating within the Istanbul Financial Center (IFC) and holding a participation certificate will benefit from a full corporate tax exemption on profits generated through transit trade, up from the previous 50% tax deduction. Outside the IFC,

companies engaged in transit trade will also gain access to substantial relief, with 95% of profits deductible from the corporate tax base.

A 20-Year Incentive Framework for Global Corporations

The package also introduces long-term incentives for multinational companies relocating regional management centres to Türkiye. Income generated from overseas activities conducted via the IFC will be fully exempt from corporate tax, while 95% of other revenues will remain outside the tax base for 20 years. The package further introduces enhanced salary-related tax incentives for highly skilled talent working within these centres.

In addition, the package provides a range of long-term incentives aimed at attracting multinational enterprises to relocate their regional management centres to Türkiye, supporting the country's ambition to become a leading regional base for international business operations.

Tax Advantages for International Residents

Individuals who have not been tax residents in Türkiye over the past three years and choose to relocate to the country will be exempt from taxation on foreign-source income for 20 years. They will be subject to taxation only on income generated within Türkiye. The package also introduces a preferential inheritance and transfer tax rate of 1% for eligible individuals, further strengthening Türkiye's ambition to attract international talent, investment, and high-net-worth individuals.

Full Tax Exemption for Service Exports

The tax deduction available for international service exports—including architecture, engineering, software, and design services—will be increased from 80% to 100%. As a result, revenues generated from these sectors will become fully tax exempt, strengthening Türkiye's position in the global knowledge and creative economy.

A New Asset Repatriation Programme on the Horizon

The proposal also includes a renewed asset repatriation scheme, enabling overseas-held cash, gold and securities to be brought into Türkiye with a 2–3% tax rate and

without tax audits on declared assets. While the legislation is expected to be submitted to the Turkish Grand National Assembly as an omnibus bill, additional amendments may

still emerge during the parliamentary process. Economists regard the package as a significant step toward establishing Istanbul as one of the region's foremost financial centres.





TÜRKİYE STUDY CHALLENGES FASHION'S RECYCLED POLYESTER NARRATIVE

A Türkiye-led scientific study found that garments made from recycled polyester by major fashion brands shed up to 55% more microfibres than virgin polyester—raising fresh concerns over greenwashing in fashion's sustainability narrative.

A scientific study conducted in Türkiye has revealed that garments marketed as “eco-friendly” or “sustainable” by major fashion players including Adidas, Nike, H&M, Shein and Zara may, in fact, be intensifying environmental harm. The research revealed that recycled polyester garments shed substantially higher levels of potentially hazardous microfibres compared with virgin polyester products, calling into question one of the fashion sector's most frequently cited sustainability narratives. The study was conducted by Prof. Dr. Sedat Gündoğdu and Assoc. Prof. Dr. İlkan Özkan from the Microplastics Research Group at Çukurova University, with findings published in a comprehensive report by the Changing Markets Foundation. The research directly questions the fashion industry's long-standing positioning of recycled polyester as a cornerstone of its so-called green transition. According to the findings, recycled polyester—frequently marketed as an environmentally

responsible alternative—does not reduce microplastic pollution and may instead exacerbate it. Laboratory testing carried out on garments purchased from Adidas, H&M, Nike, Shein and Zara found that recycled polyester releases not only a higher number of microfibres than virgin polyester, but also finer particles considered more problematic for ecosystems and human health. As part of the study, researchers purchased and tested a total of 51 garments across the five brands. Results showed that recycled polyester released an average of 12,430 fibres per gram, compared to 8,028 fibres per gram in virgin polyester—indicating an approximately 55% higher rate of fibre shedding. The findings come at a time when fashion brands are increasingly placing recycled materials at the core of their ESG strategies, prompting broader questions about transparency, lifecycle impacts, and the extent to which circularity claims are supported by robust scientific evidence.

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countdown

TO THE 10TH IFCO begins



The global meeting point of the Turkish fashion industry returns on August 19–21 with a stronger vision and an expanded international outlook.



Having evolved into the global showcase of the Turkish fashion industry, the İstanbul Fashion Connection (IFCO) is preparing to open its doors for the 10th time between August 19–21, 2026. Further strengthening its status as Europe's largest apparel and fashion fair, IFCO extends beyond the role of a conventional trade exhibition to function as a dynamic strategic ecosystem where design innovation, brand development, production expertise, digital transformation, and

global collaborations come together. Over the past four years, the fair has maintained a steady growth trajectory, strengthening its position as one of the Turkish fashion industry's most influential gateways to global markets. Over nine editions, IFCO has evolved into a global sourcing platform, bringing together 3,791 companies and 220,776 buyers from more than 165 countries across over 200,000 sqm of exhibition space, reinforcing Türkiye's position as a key hub for apparel sourcing and export

growth. The ninth edition alone attracted nearly 30,000 visitors from across five continents and featured more than 400 exhibitors, underscoring its growing international reach and industry influence.

IFCO has not only grown — it has evolved

Initially recognised as a powerful trade fair for the apparel sector, IFCO has transformed into a multidimensional fashion ecosystem with each successive



No longer merely a trade fair, IFCO has become a globally recognized platform that showcases the Turkish fashion industry's production expertise, design innovation, and export potential to the world.



29,746

Visitors

450

Exhibitors



edition. Bringing together every stakeholder of the industry — from apparel manufacturers and global brands to designers, occasionwear specialists, childrenswear, lingerie, technology and e-export solutions — the platform has moved far beyond the boundaries of a conventional trade event.

Specialised spaces create a more immersive experience

One of IFCO's most remarkable evolutions in recent seasons

has been its design and experience-driven framework. The Core İstanbul, dedicated to bringing Turkish designers together with international buyers, has become far more than a showcase platform; it now serves as a creative hub amplifying the visibility of Türkiye's design talent on a global scale. Through the integration of AI-driven presentations, carefully curated storytelling, and a unified design language, the fair has further elevated its international standing and global appeal.

The expansion of global customer networks through the dedicated brands section, the presentation of Türkiye's craftsmanship in occasionwear through Fashionist, and the integration of Linexpo into the broader IFCO ecosystem have also emerged among the fair's defining growth narratives. The overall picture reinforces Türkiye's competitive strength not only in product development, but also in design excellence, quality, flexibility and speed-to-market capabilities.



Nine editions. 3,791 companies. 220,776 buyers. More than 165 countries. Europe's largest apparel and fashion fair, IFCO, is preparing to transform İstanbul into a global centre of fashion commerce once again at its landmark 10th edition.

The bar is set even higher for the 10th edition

As IFCO enters its milestone 10th edition, the August fair is expected to place greater emphasis on stronger international buying delegations, expanded brand participation and future-facing events centred on the transformation of fashion. Topics shaping the next era of the industry — including digitalisation, artificial intelligence, sustainability, e-export and data-driven manufacturing — are expected to take on greater visibility through seminars and experiential activations.

Building an even stronger sourcing hub

The expansion of design-focused

spaces that highlight Türkiye's creative fashion ecosystem, stronger global collaborations for brands and a more integrated exhibition structure across product categories are all expected to define the next phase of IFCO's evolution. With an increasingly diverse product offering ranging from childrenswear and denim to occasionwear, lingerie, and designer collections, the fair is poised to become an even more attractive sourcing hub for international buyers. According to İHKİB Vice Chairman Mustafa Paşahan, IFCO has secured a permanent place on the international fashion calendar, attracting growing global buyer interest with every edition. Paşahan describes



IFCO as one of the most strategic platforms for showcasing the Turkish fashion industry's production capabilities and design strength to international markets.

The 10th gathering offers a strong opportunity

Bringing together innovation, sourcing, and international business opportunities, IFCO's 10th edition offers industry professionals a unique opportunity to expand global networks, access new markets, track emerging trends, and engage directly with the dynamic transformation of the Turkish fashion sector. This August, İstanbul will once again become the meeting point where fashion, commerce, creativity and future vision intersect.



"The era of disposable consumption is ending, making way for circular, sustainable, longer-lasting and smarter production models. Türkiye holds a competitive advantage here."



Mustafa Paşahan
Chairman of the Istanbul Apparel Exporters' Association (İHKİB)

"We raise the bar with every IFCO"

İHKİB Chairman Mustafa Paşahan emphasizes that IFCO has rapidly grown into a strategic global showcase for the Turkish fashion industry, effectively demonstrating its manufacturing capacity, design innovation, and export potential to international markets.

"IFCO, Europe's largest apparel and fashion fair, has secured a permanent place on the international fashion calendar. Through an increasingly qualified exhibitor profile and growing global visitor interest, we continue to support our export-driven growth strategy," says Paşahan. "At the ninth edition, we brought participating companies together with 30,000 buyers from five continents. Having established a strong brand identity, IFCO will continue to be one of the key global showcases for our fashion industry."

Paşahan emphasises that Türkiye is no longer competing as a low-cost manufacturing destination.

"We cannot compete with Asian markets on cheap labour. At the same time, production and supply chains across Europe are undergoing a structural transformation. The era of disposable consumption is ending, making way for circular, sustainable, longer-lasting and smarter production models. Türkiye holds a competitive advantage here."

He highlights that the evolving regulatory landscape in Europe is accelerating a shift away from surplus inventory strategies in favor of agile, demand-driven, and highly controlled production models.

"Large-volume orders will increasingly give way to fast and flexible manufacturing structures where part of production is guaranteed and the remainder becomes performance-based. Agility and flexibility will define competitiveness. This is precisely where Türkiye can lead. In the new era, we will stand out as a key inventory production hub — a destination defined by attainable luxury, speed and quality."

TEXHIBITION ISTANBUL

returns
with
a stronger
vision for its

10TH
edition

Texhibition İstanbul, having rapidly evolved into a global hub for the textile industry, will return on September 9–11 with an even stronger focus on sourcing excellence and innovation.



Having brought together the Turkish textile industry with tens of thousands of global buyers from more than 125 countries across nine editions, Texhibition İstanbul is set to further reinforce its position on the international textile calendar through stronger buyer delegations, expanded innovation platforms, and an increasingly dynamic sourcing ecosystem.

The global language of textiles is being written in İstanbul

Having become the global showcase of the Turkish textile industry, Texhibition İstanbul Fabric,

Yarn and Textile Accessories Fair is preparing to open its doors for the 10th time between September 9–11, 2026. With each edition, Texhibition İstanbul continues to strengthen its position as one of Europe's leading textile fairs. Today, it has evolved beyond a conventional trade platform to become a strategic meeting point where innovation, sustainability, technology, design, and global partnerships converge. Having achieved remarkable momentum in a relatively short period, the fair has positioned itself as one of the Turkish textile industry's most important trade

bridges to the world. Over the course of its first nine editions, Texhibition İstanbul has brought together thousands of industry professionals, making a significant contribution to the sector's export-driven growth ambitions. The ninth edition featured nearly 500 exhibitors and welcomed more than 20,000 visitors from approximately 100 countries across a 43,000-square-metre exhibition area. Through international buyer programmes, B2B meetings, and Trend areas, the fair successfully connected Türkiye's manufacturing excellence and commitment to quality with global markets.



Dedicated trend zones for woven fabrics, knitwear, accessories, and denim have evolved beyond product showcases to become inspiration hubs that interpret and anticipate the future direction of the global textile industry.



Beyond fabric: where trend, technology and transformation converge

Initially recognised as a strong trade fair for the textile sector, Texhibition Istanbul has evolved into a multidimensional textile ecosystem with every season. Bringing together the industry's full spectrum — from fabrics, yarns and textile accessories to denim, innovative materials and sustainable manufacturing solutions — the platform has moved far beyond the boundaries of a conventional textile exhibition.

One of the most defining transformations of recent editions has been the fair's increasing emphasis on trend forecasting and innovation. Dedicated woven, knitted, accessory and denim trend areas have evolved into inspiration hubs that decode the future direction of global textiles rather than simply displaying products. Smart textiles, biotechnology-based materials, AI-powered manufacturing systems and next-generation sustainability solutions have increasingly reinforced Texhibition's future-facing

Texhibition has evolved far beyond a conventional trade fair, becoming a global platform that showcases the Turkish textile industry's manufacturing strength, innovation capabilities, and sustainability vision to international markets.



vision. The growing prominence of denim manufacturing through Blue Black Texhibition, the Innovation Hub's integration of technology and material innovation, and the ReValue Stock Hub's ability to transform circularity into a commercially viable sourcing model have all significantly broadened the fair's scope and strategic impact. Today, Texhibition has become not simply a place to source products, but a platform where innovation, sustainability and the future of textiles are actively discussed.





This September, Istanbul will once again stand at the intersection of textile manufacturing, technology and future vision.



500

Exhibitors

100

20,000 visitors from around 100 countries

Shaping the Sourcing Landscape of a New Era

As Texhibition İstanbul prepares to celebrate its landmark 10th edition, the September event is set to welcome stronger international buyer delegations, a broader product offering, and more immersive experiences focused on the industry's transformation agenda. Key themes shaping the future of textiles are expected to take centre stage through an expanded programme of seminars and dedicated innovation-focused spaces. Particular emphasis is expected to be placed on value-added textiles, advanced fabric technologies and agile manufacturing

models aligned with the evolving expectations of European markets. From denim and knitwear to technical textiles and accessories, the fair's expanding product universe is poised to further strengthen Texhibition İstanbul's position as a leading sourcing destination for global buyers. Recent editions have also demonstrated that, despite ongoing global uncertainties, international buyer interest remains remarkably resilient. Buyers from Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and neighbouring regions continue to choose Türkiye for its proven strengths in quality, speed-to-market, and vertically integrated manufacturing capa-

bilities. A more professional visitor profile and an increasingly sophisticated B2B ecosystem continue to strengthen the commercial impact of the fair with every edition.

Value-added textiles take centre stage

For industry professionals looking to expand their global networks, access new markets, and stay ahead of emerging material innovations and sourcing trends, the 10th edition of Texhibition İstanbul presents a compelling opportunity. This September, İstanbul will once again stand at the crossroads of textile manufacturing, technology, and forward-looking industry vision.



Fatih Bilici
İTHİB Vice President

“The game is no longer about price — it is about value”

Fatih Bilici highlights that, in a remarkably short period, Texhibition İstanbul has established itself as one of the most influential textile gatherings not only in Europe but across the broader region. According to Bilici, the fair continues to generate increasing value with each edition by bringing together the Turkish textile industry's quality, design expertise, and manufacturing excellence with global buyers.

Bilici emphasises that the structural transformation taking place across global supply chains is creating significant opportunities for Türkiye. As European markets increasingly prioritise speed, sustainability, flexibility, and supply-chain reliability over cost alone, Türkiye's integrated manufacturing ecosystem and agile delivery capabilities offer a distinct competitive advantage.

“Texhibition İstanbul continues to distinguish itself as one of the most important platforms showcasing the global competitiveness of the Turkish textile industry,” he notes.

THE FUTURE OF INNOVATIVE TEXTILES IS BEING ENGINEERED IN TÜRKİYE

Türkiye's textile industry is gaining global recognition not only for its manufacturing capabilities, but also for its capacity to develop high-value-added, innovation-driven, technology-oriented, and sustainable textile solutions. From smart fabrics and bio-based materials to advanced recycling technologies and technical textiles, a rapidly evolving innovation ecosystem is transforming the future of the industry.

Today, the Turkish textile sector is repositioning itself beyond traditional manufacturing by placing R&D, innovation, and functionality at the center of production. As consumer expectations continue to evolve toward performance, sustainability, wellness, and intelligent design, textile manufacturers in Türkiye are developing next-generation materials capable of meeting both current and future demands. The Innovation Hub, established within the framework of Texhibition Istanbul and organized by İTHİB, serves as one of the most compelling examples of this transformation. Bringing together groundbreaking textile innovations under one roof, the platform showcases Türkiye's expanding capabilities in textile technology, sustainability, and design to international buyers and industry stakeholders alike.

Hemp Emerges as a Natural High-Performance Material

Among the standout materials shaping the future of sustainable textiles is hemp. Mem Textile's "Local and National Hemp" fabric is produced using high-quality hemp fibers cultivated in Amasya's Gümüşhacıköy region. The material offers significant carbon absorption during cultivation while requiring minimal water

consumption and no pesticides. Its biodegradable structure and soil-regenerating properties position hemp as a highly sustainable raw material balancing ecological responsibility with technical durability. Similarly, Mert İpek's "Extreme Hemp" fabric, made entirely from hemp fibers, combines industrial-level durability with improved softness achieved through advanced mechanical finishing techniques. High tensile strength and form stability allow the material to bridge natural fibers with performance engineering. Hisar Tekstil's "Hemp & TENCEL™" fabric merges hemp's structural strength with

the fluidity and softness of TENCEL™ fibers, creating a balance between technical performance and refined drape. Meanwhile, Deniz Tekstil combines bamboo and hemp fibers in its "Natural Fresh Touch" fabric to achieve breathability, antibacterial functionality, moisture management, and long-term durability.

Circular and High Value-Added Textile Solutions

Innovation in Türkiye's textile industry increasingly revolves around circularity and multi-functional performance. Tunca Textile Design's "Sustainable Denim Like" project introduces a lightweight and

Mem Textile's "Local and NationalHemp" fabric is produced using high-quality hemp fibers cultivated in Amasya's Gümüşhacıköy region.





Innovation in Türkiye's textile industry increasingly revolves around circularity and multifunctional performance.

breathable textile solution combining rapid drying, thermal insulation, and advanced moisture management. Produced from leather, non-leather polyamide, and polyester microfilaments, the fabric offers shape memory, durability, and natural resistance against dust mites, bacteria, and mosquitoes. The company has also collaborated with BTB on "Chance Check," a sustainable woven fabric developed entirely from recycled textile waste. Through advanced fiber regeneration processes, the project significantly reduces natural resource consumption, carbon emissions, water usage, and energy demand, contributing to a more

sustainable textile production model. Among the most technologically advanced developments is the "Graphene-Based Flame Retardant Textile Technology" created by Tunca Textile Design in collaboration with Halit Çavuşoğlu. Unlike traditional flame-retardant textiles containing chlorine, bromine, or phosphorus-based additives, the graphene oxide coating technology avoids releasing toxic gases during combustion while maintaining recyclability and environmental safety. Beyond passive fire protection, the graphene coating provides electrical conductivity, enabling applications in smart textiles and high-performance thermal



Türkiye's growing capabilities in textile technology, sustainability, and design to international buyers and industry stakeholders.

management products across defense, aerospace, automotive interiors, aviation seating, and technical apparel sectors.

Fabrics Designed for Electromagnetic Protection

As wearable technologies and wireless communication systems expand globally, Turkish manufacturers are also developing textiles that interact directly with electromagnetic environments. Developed through a collaboration between Marmara University and Fetih Tekstil, the "EMI Shielding Knitted Fabric" is designed to protect users from electromagnetic waves generated by 5G and emerging 6G technologies. Produced using

silver-coated polyester yarns, the fabric combines effective electromagnetic shielding with antibacterial properties and odor-control performance, offering both protection and enhanced user comfort. Similarly, Can Tekstil's radiation-protective fabric integrates natural cotton fibers with 99.9 percent pure silver-coated yarns to deliver antibacterial, antistatic, and electromagnetic shielding properties while maintaining breathability and comfort. Biotechnology is becoming one of the defining pillars of Türkiye's textile transformation. Aydın Örme / Lila's "Silky Touch" project transforms collagen peptides extracted from fish scales —

a by-product of the food industry — into a bionic fiber combined with Nylon 6 polymerization technology. The resulting textile minimizes allergic reactions, manages odor molecules, delivers deep color retention, and offers a "second skin" sensory experience. Trend Etiket's "Tea Leather" introduces another innovative material developed from plant-based tea production waste. Positioned as an alternative to synthetic and animal leather, the material reduces water consumption and carbon emissions while offering a refined matte surface suitable for accessories, labels, and lifestyle products.

Meanwhile, Ozanteks's "TEN-CEL™" fabric technology combines closed-loop sustainability systems with exceptional softness, breathability, antibacterial properties, and long-lasting durability. The production process also enables the recovery of more than 99 percent of the chemicals used, significantly reducing environmental impact while supporting sustainable manufacturing practices.

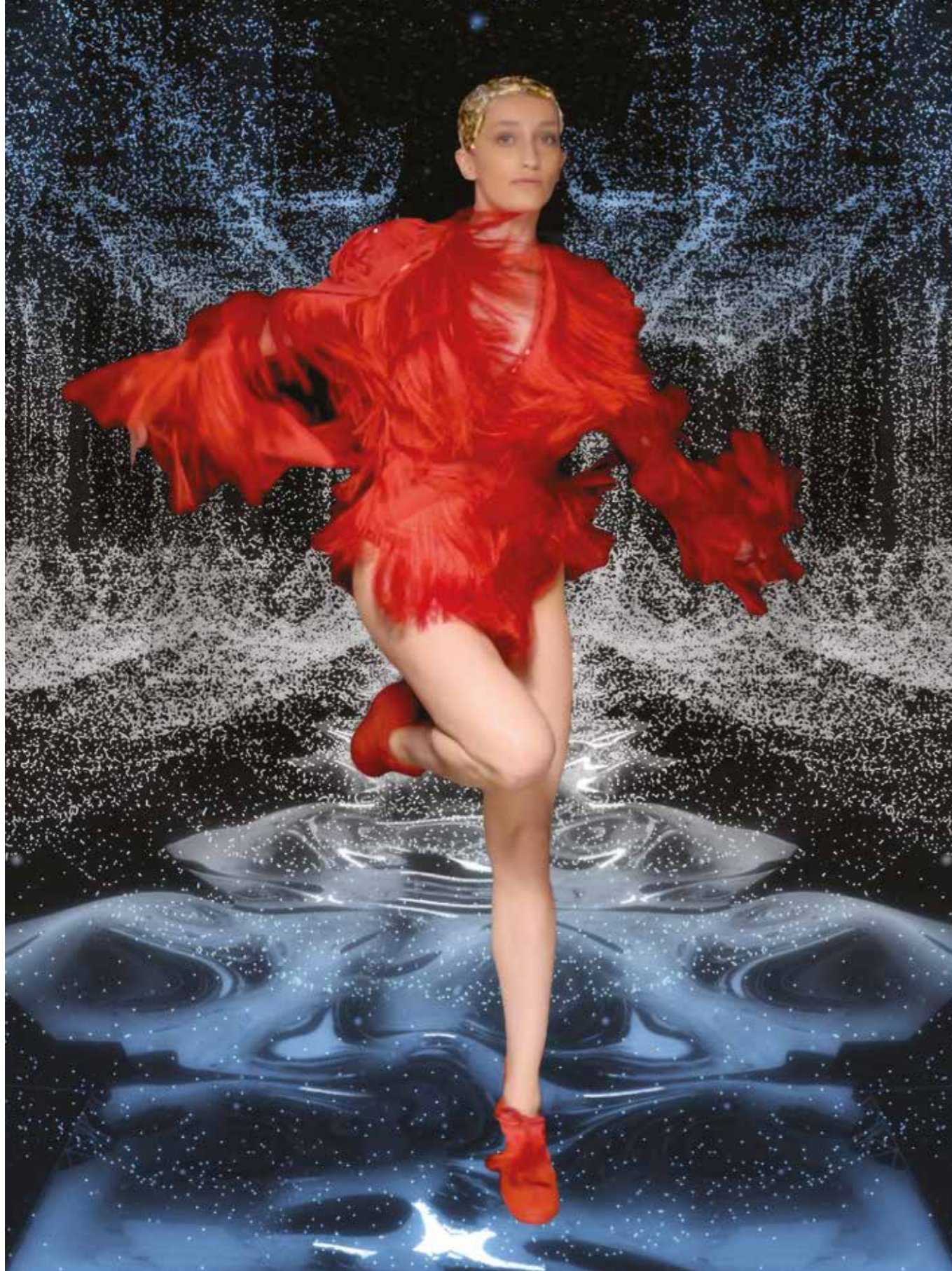
Smart Textiles That Interact with the Human Body

One of the most significant shifts shaping the sector is the rise of intelligent textiles designed to interact directly with the human body. Medex's "Living Alchemy" collection combines traditional rotary printing techniques with heat- and light-reactive technol-

ogies. The garments change color depending on body temperature or environmental conditions, transforming static surfaces into dynamic sensory experiences. Similarly, Ankan's "Bioceramic" fabrics integrate natural minerals at the molecular level into textile fibers. By reflecting body heat back as far infrared radiation (FIR), the material improves circulation, supports thermoregulation, reduces muscle fatigue, and enhances sleep quality. Aydın Tekstil's "Sleep Maker" technology takes this concept further through grounding-based sleep systems designed to replicate the Earth's electrical potential indoors. The system aims to reduce stress, eliminate static electricity, and improve sleep performance.

Engineering the Future of Apparel and Technical Textiles

Advanced engineering continues to redefine textile performance in Türkiye. JMK's "2219" wool fabric combines thermal regulation, moisture absorption, UV protection, wrinkle recovery, and natural flame-retardant performance through specially engineered crimped wool fibers. Meanwhile, recycling-driven projects such as MSS's "MELFI T2T" demonstrate how textile and apparel waste can be transformed back into fibers and reintroduced into production cycles through advanced textile-to-textile recycling systems.



Arzu Kaprol

Human Innovation Designer



“FASHION-TECH COLLABORATIONS ARE GAINING SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM IN TÜRKİYE”

Bringing together technology, materials, and data to elevate the human experience, Human Innovation Designer Arzu Kaprol says Türkiye’s fashion-tech ecosystem is entering a new phase of transformation. “There has been a visible momentum in fashion and technology collaborations in Türkiye in recent years. I believe cross-sector partnerships are critical at this point,” she says.

► Zeynep Tütüncü Güngör



Where technology was once applied to fashion after the design stage, it now serves as a fundamental starting point, shaping products and experiences from the very beginning of the creative process.



I will focus on designs that evolve together with the user and learn through data.



You describe yourself not as a “fashion designer” but as a “human innovation designer.” How does this definition translate into your design practice? How do you merge fashion, people, and innovation?

I find the term “fashion designer” too narrow to capture the scope of my work. Design, in my view, extends far beyond aesthetics—it is a tool for problem-solving and creating meaningful impact. As a “human innovation designer,” I focus on understanding human behavior, addressing real needs, and exploring how people interact with the future. Every project starts with a fundamental question: What value will this product create, and how will it shape the lives of those who use it? Fashion

becomes the medium, while innovation is the force that determines how that medium evolves. I bring together technology, materials, and data in ways that enhance the human experience.

You have worked at the intersection of fashion and technology for many years. Do you think fashion and technology are still in an “integration” phase, or has an entirely new discipline emerged from this relationship?

I believe we have moved far beyond the integration phase. In the past, technology was something added onto fashion afterward. Today, it has become the starting point of the design process itself. In that sense, we can absolutely speak of a new discipline.

Fashion is no longer merely a field of aesthetic production; it has evolved into a system design practice that works with data, interacts with users, and generates functionality. This transformation is also redefining the role of the designer. Designers today are no longer shaping only form — they are designing experiences and systems.

In your wearable technology projects, what was the most challenging breaking point you faced, and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge was interdisciplinary communication. Fashion, engineering, and software development all speak very different languages. At the beginning, this

created significant friction. The solution was to establish a shared language. I positioned myself not merely as someone producing aesthetics, but as a bridge connecting multiple disciplines. Over time, I realized that true innovation is never individual — it is always collective.

Your designs developed specifically for scientists in Antarctica radically expand fashion’s functionality. How did you establish a dialogue between fashion and science in this project?

In the Antarctica project, survival — not aesthetics — was at the center of the design process. We began by carefully analyzing the scientists’ working conditions:

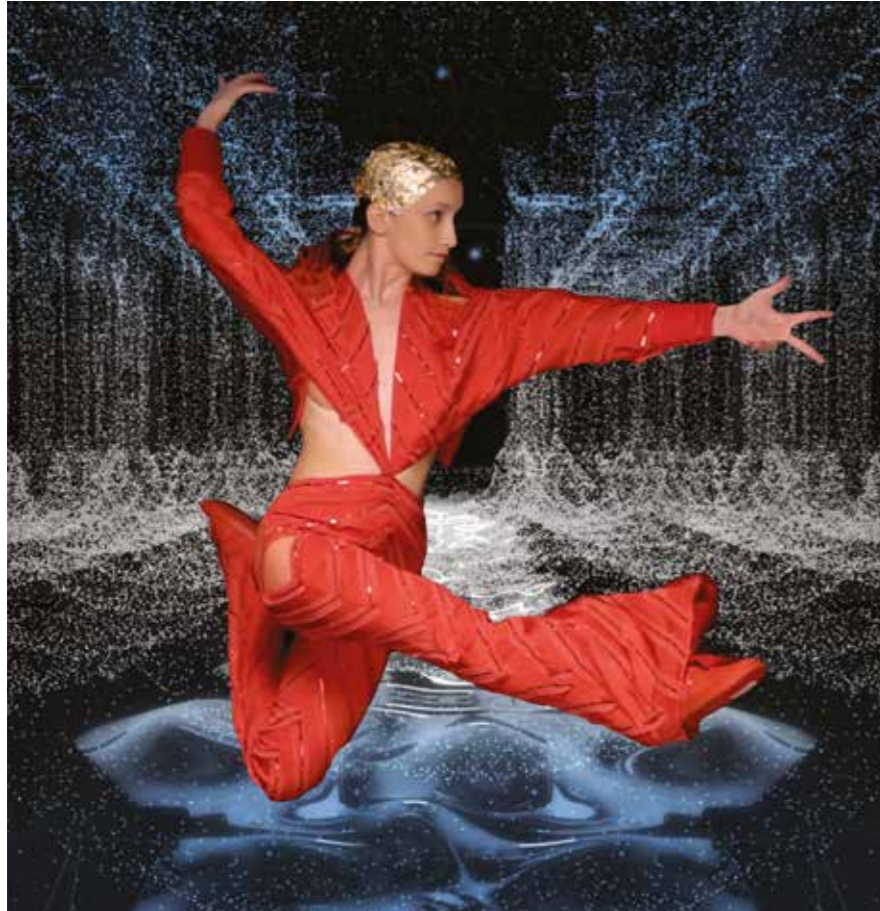
extreme cold, intense winds, restricted mobility, and the need for long-term endurance. The dialogue between fashion and science emerged through solving these challenges. Layered construction, thermal management, moisture balance, and ergonomics became the foundation of the garments.

A key ambition of the project was to develop and manufacture this high-performance protective apparel within Türkiye’s sophisticated textile ecosystem. Combining the country’s extensive manufacturing expertise with demanding technical specifications marked an important milestone—demonstrating not only creative innovation but also the strength and versatility of Türkiye’s indus-

trial capabilities. In this context, fashion became not only a tool that transformed scientific data into wearable solutions, but also a platform showcasing the capabilities of Türkiye’s textile industry on an international stage.

You have also designed training apparel for the Turkish Armed Forces and G-suits and camouflage uniforms for F-16 pilots.

Material selection lies at the heart of these projects, as performance is intrinsically linked to the materials themselves. Türkiye benefits from a strong and well-established textile manufacturing base, while its technical textiles sector continues to evolve rapidly. This combination of manufacturing excellence and growing techno-



Türkiye has a very strong manufacturing infrastructure in textiles and is making significant progress in technical textiles.



I do not use technology as an effect or decorative element. I see it as an infrastructure that redefines the function, experience and meaning of design.

logical capability is creating new opportunities for the development of advanced, high-performance textile solutions.

We are able to meet many of our needs through local production, although some advanced materials still require international sourcing. Even so, I believe Türkiye holds tremendous potential in this field. As investments in R&D increase and designers become more integrated into manufacturing processes, Türkiye can achieve a much stronger position globally.

Your collections incorporate holograms, smart textiles, and digital surfaces. For you, what defines a design as “technological”: the tools used or the mindset behind it?

For me, it is unquestionably the mindset. Technology is not limited to the tools being used; it is a way of thinking that defines the entire design approach. If a design interacts with its user, solves a problem, and evolves through data, then it is already technological. Holograms, smart textiles, and digital surfaces are simply visible outputs of that philosophy. What truly matters is how deeply technology is integrated into the essence of the design itself. I do not use technology as an effect or decorative element. I see it as an infrastructure that redefines function, experience, and meaning. Ultimately, what makes a design “technological” is not how advanced the tools are, but how

advanced the thinking behind it is. This perspective transforms fashion from a static object into a living experience that evolves together with the user.

How do you evaluate the development of fashion-tech collaborations in Türkiye?

There has been a visible momentum in fashion and technology collaborations in Türkiye in recent years. However, for this momentum to become more sustainable and long-lasting, different stakeholders need to work much more closely together. This is exactly why I consider cross-sector collaboration to be so important. The Texhibition Innovation Hub, where I serve as Creative Director, was created in

response to this need—to build bridges between creativity, technology, academia, and industry, and to cultivate an environment where innovation can thrive. It creates a collaborative space where designers, textile manufacturers, and technology developers can work together and generate new ideas collectively. I believe this inclusive approach—especially involving textile manufacturers across the ecosystem—is extremely valuable. Collaborations established with organizations such as İTKİB and innovation-focused companies are helping make the sector’s potential more visible internationally. Such platforms cultivate more than manufacturing excellence;

they help build a culture of shared knowledge, collaboration, and co-development. Strengthening Türkiye’s position on the global stage will require a closer integration of its manufacturing power with technology and design. The future belongs to those who can successfully combine these capabilities to create innovative, high-value solutions that stand out in international markets. Long-term collaborations between universities, technology companies, manufacturers, and designers are essential. Likewise, increasing investment in R&D and supporting new ideas will be critical parts of this transformation. I believe this evolution will position Türkiye not only as a manufacturing country, but also

as a country that develops and leads innovation.

Are you currently working on a new project or collection? What kind of Arzu Kaprol innovation can fashion-tech audiences expect next?

I’m particularly interested in wearable technologies that establish deeper interaction with users and offer personalized experiences. Looking ahead, my focus will be on creating designs that go beyond functionality and aesthetics—designs that evolve with the user, learn through data, and become increasingly responsive over time. The ambition is to redefine fashion, transforming it from a static object into an intelligent, living system that adapts to the people who interact with it.

THE R&D SHIFT IN TEXTILES

TOWARDS INTELLIGENT, FUNCTIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

As global competition shifts away from price-led manufacturing towards technology, sustainability and value-added production, Türkiye's textile and apparel industry is entering a new era—powered by R&D centres, technical textiles, bio-based materials and next-generation functional products.



For decades, Türkiye's textile and apparel industry secured a strong position within global value chains through its manufacturing scale, flexible supply network and export capabilities. Today, however, the competitive landscape is being fundamentally reshaped. Speed and quality alone are no longer enough. The market increasingly rewards products that consume fewer resources, reduce carbon impact, deliver measurable performance and offer advanced functionality tailored to evolving industry needs.

The new currency of textiles: Innovation

Three powerful forces are accelerating this transformation: the sustainability agenda reinforced by the European Green Deal, the rapid expansion of the technical textiles market and shifting consumer expectations centred around performance, comfort and environmental responsibility. The European Union's Ecodecision for Sustainable Products Regulation, introduced in 2024, is redefining how products are designed, placing durability, circularity, resource efficiency and environmental performance at the centre of manufacturing. At the same time, regulatory pressure surround-

ing traceability, circular production and extended producer responsibility is forcing textile manufacturers to rethink both materials and production systems.

In this increasingly demanding environment, the future of competitiveness lies not in scale alone, but in the ability to develop higher-value, technology-driven solutions.

Laboratories are shaping the future of textiles

Türkiye's response to this shift is becoming increasingly visible through the rise of R&D centres, university-industry collaborations and investments in technical textiles.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Technology, Türkiye had 1,363 R&D centres and 342 design centres by the end of 2025—an ecosystem that is increasingly shaping industrial innovation across sectors. For the textile industry, this marks a transition from a predominantly manufacturing-focused sector to one that is increasingly driven by material development, process engineering, and high-value product innovation. In this new phase, the textile industry is no longer simply producing fabrics; it is engineering performance, functionality and measurable outcomes.

From performance-driven textiles to hemp-based biomaterials, Türkiye's textile industry is undergoing a profound transformation—moving beyond manufacturing scale toward innovation-led value creation.



According to Nilay Kuğu, R&D Centre Manager at Toraman Tekstil



According to Seda Ünal, R&D Centre Manager and Project Coordinator at Polyteks

shift taking place across the industry. Innovation in textiles no longer simply means creating “better fabric.” Instead, fabrics are evolving into intelligent systems capable of regulating heat, transferring moisture, adapting to movement and interacting with the wearer. Sports textiles, medical textiles, smart textiles and sustainable high-performance fabrics are increasingly positioned among Türkiye's most strategic opportunities for raising export value per kilogram.

Could hemp become textile's next-generation raw material?

A second major transformation is unfolding around sustainable raw materials and bio-based production. Developed by the Polyteks R&D Centre, the project titled “Development of Value-Added Products and Processes from Hemp for Different Industries” aims to harness the potential of industrial and medicinal hemp cultivated in Türkiye to create advanced materials and innovative solutions for a wide range of sectors, including

Fabrics that manage moisture, regulate heat and respond to movement

One example of this transformation can be seen in Toraman Tekstil's next-generation knitted fabric project for sports textiles. According to Nilay Kuğu, R&D Centre Manager at Toraman

Tekstil, the company's innovation strategy extends beyond product development, encompassing process optimisation, resource efficiency, sustainable manufacturing and the development of high-value functional textiles. At the core of the company's R&D focus are next-generation

fibre technologies, functional fabric structures and user-oriented textile solutions. Toraman Tekstil's award-winning project, “Knitted Fabric Enhancing Athlete Comfort and Performance Through Next-Generation Textile Fibre”, recognised by the UTİB TechX-tile Innovation League, reflects

this broader transformation. The innovation combines naturally derived comfort fibres with performance-oriented synthetic materials in a carefully balanced structure. Through a multilayered textile system, thermal regulation, moisture management, breathability, elasticity, shape retention and

tactile comfort are integrated within a single fabric platform. Perhaps most notably, the fabric incorporates heat-sensitive properties capable of visually monitoring muscle activity—transforming the textile from a passive material into an interactive performance surface. The project signals a broader



Standard products is coming to an end. In Türkiye's textile industry, competitiveness is increasingly being redefined through functional fabrics, sustainable materials and technology-driven R&D.



For Türkiye's textile industry, R&D is no longer a supporting function—it is becoming the defining axis of competitiveness.

textiles, construction materials, resins, and composites. The initiative highlights the growing role of bio-based resources in supporting sustainable industrial development and high-value manufacturing. Supported under the Türkiye Green Industry Project—implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Industry and Technology, TÜBİTAK and KOSGEB with World Bank financing—the initiative seeks to reposition hemp not merely as an agricultural raw material, but as the foundation of a multi-sector value chain. According to Seda Ünal, R&D Centre Manager and Project Coordinator at Polyteks, the ambition is clear: to create high-value products from 100 per cent

locally sourced hemp for textiles, composites, resins and structural applications. Polyteks' broader innovation strategy also demonstrates how sustainability in textiles is evolving far beyond recycling. Alongside its recycled PET-based POLY-eco® product range, the company has developed Poly-Bio®, designed for faster biodegradation, as well as a portfolio of specialised yarn technologies including flame-retardant yarns, moisture-management structures, UV-resistant products, thermally insulating yarns, phosphorescent materials, hollow structures and Türkiye's first dissolvable yarn technology. Particularly noteworthy are the

company's hemp-based PLA yarn developments, which combine existing expertise in corn-based PLA production with hemp-derived structures to create lower-impact, bio-based and higher-value textile solutions. The project also embraces circularity by proposing a zero-waste production model in which every component of the hemp plant—from fibre to biomass residue—is utilised.

Türkiye's real opportunity lies in high-value technical textiles Global market dynamics further reinforce the urgency of this transformation. According to market projections, the technical textiles market is

expected to expand significantly by 2030, driven by growing demand across mobility, healthcare, defence, sports, construction, automotive, agriculture and environmental technologies. Textiles are increasingly evolving from end-use products into engineered solutions. For Türkiye, this shift represents an opportunity to reposition its manufacturing strength through higher-value production. While textile and apparel companies continue to maintain a significant presence in major industrial rankings such as ISO 500 and Fortune 500 Türkiye, the long-term decline in sector representation highlights mounting pressure on traditional production models.

The next competitive threshold will be defined not only by scale, but by the ability to generate technology. Toraman Tekstil's performance-oriented smart fabric and Polyteks' hemp-based biomaterial innovations represent two distinct yet complementary dimensions of this shift. One expands the boundaries of textiles through functionality, user experience and performance intelligence; the other redefines sustainability through circular materials and bio-based production systems.

In the new textile economy, R&D determines value For Türkiye's textile industry, R&D is no longer a supporting

function—it is becoming the defining axis of competitiveness. As the era of standardised products fades, the industry's future will increasingly be shaped by technical textiles, functional yarns, bio-based materials, smart surfaces, low-carbon production processes and stronger university-industry collaboration. With its established manufacturing infrastructure, adaptability and growing innovation ecosystem, Türkiye now has an opportunity to strengthen its position not only as a manufacturing hub, but as a developer of technology, design and high-value textile solutions.



Eray Yükseloğlu

Founder of Raff Military Textile



“DIFFERENTIATION BEGINS WITH INNOVATION”

Eray Yükseloğlu, Founder of Raff Military Textile—an established manufacturer supplying military textiles to numerous markets, particularly across Africa—shared insights into the company’s innovation-driven strategy, stating: “We are undertaking extensive and highly significant R&D initiatives, with a strong focus on developing breakthrough textile technologies and next-generation performance fabrics that can address the evolving needs of the industry.”

Could you tell us about your journey into the industry and the founding of Raff Military Textile?

My connection with the textile industry began at an early age through my family, as both my grandfather and father were active in the business. Up until 2000, we operated mainly in the denim segment. A turning point came when one of our consultants attended an industry conference and shared a forward-looking perspective on how the textile and apparel sector would transform in the future. This insight fundamentally reshaped my vision. Long before China and Vietnam became major global manufacturing hubs, we recognized the potential shift in the competitive landscape and started evaluating how we could adapt our business model and position ourselves for the next

phase of industry evolution. Through my grandfather—who had served in the military and also produced military garments—we had always had an interest in military textiles. We restructured the company and began operating in this field. Initially, we participated in various tenders, but the procedures were highly complex and, despite large-scale projects, the returns were not satisfactory. Consequently, in 2010 we undertook a complete strategic shift toward international markets. We initially supplied sweaters and tracksuits to police forces in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus before expanding our operations through partnerships in Georgia, Iraq, and Yemen. Today, Raff Military Textile is positioned as a full-service military supplier, offering a comprehensive range of products



We produce entirely with domestic materials—none of our products use imported inputs.

and solutions designed to meet the diverse operational needs of armed forces worldwide.

Why did you choose to specialize in police and military apparel on an international scale?

After 2000, we made a strategic decision to focus on a niche segment. While anyone can produce a sweater, we chose to specialize in police sweaters. We defined a clear area of expertise.

We initially began with knitwear; however, as our clients encountered difficulties sourcing other military products, we gradually expanded our portfolio to deliver the quality and reliability associated with Raff Military Textile

across a much broader range of categories. Today, supported by an extensive network of trusted solution partners, we are able to respond swiftly to a wide variety of requirements—from basic field essentials such as blankets to highly specialized medical supplies. This flexible and integrated approach enables us to meet even the most unexpected demands within remarkably short time-frames.

You have also invested significantly in digitalization. Could you elaborate on these efforts and their impact?

Over a decade ago, we recognized that the industry was moving

toward digitalization. Instead of investing in physical retail, we focused on building a strong online presence. At the time, concepts like SEO were not widely known, but we began working with specialists under different frameworks and continuously developed our expertise. As export markets have always been at the core of our business strategy, we have made significant investments in digital marketing. Recognizing our strong presence across African markets, we prioritized building a robust online visibility strategy to ensure that clients and partners in these regions could easily access and engage with our brand.

“Our R&D efforts also focus on the development of advanced fabrics, including flame-resistant textiles, enhanced camouflage materials, and signal-blocking solutions engineered for high-performance applications”



Our goal was to rank at the top of search engines globally for keywords related to our business and we achieved it.

We also separated our marketing and sales functions and employed local talent from the regions we serve, enabling us to better understand these markets and strengthen our digital positioning. Recognizing the strategic importance of digital engagement, we developed a multidisciplinary in-house team that includes SEO specialists, graphic designers, copywriters, photographers, and content creators. This structure allows us to manage every aspect of our digital presence with consistency, agility, and professionalism. Our goal was to rank at the top of search engines globally for keywords related to our busi-

ness—and we achieved it. This has generated significant traffic. For example, a client from Gabon discovered us online seven years ago and proceeded to purchase our products. Without digital marketing, we would not have been able to establish a global presence.

What kind of investments are you making in technology, innovation, and R&D?

We are carrying out extensive R&D initiatives. For example, we have developed an insect-repellent fabric—particularly relevant for African markets—using specially treated materials to keep insects away from the body. This innovation has attracted signifi-

cant attention in local media. We are also working on a range of advanced fabrics, including flame-resistant, camouflage-enhancing, and signal-blocking materials. We are planning to establish a dedicated R&D center and are currently in discussions with industrial engineers. Although these projects are still in development, we believe that by the end of 2025, we will be able to produce truly groundbreaking technological fabrics. Without this level of innovation, differentiation in the industry is simply not possible. Such advancements will contribute substantially to our nation’s long-term growth and prosperity.

Could you share details about your production facilities and capacity?

The continued expansion of our military textile activities soon rendered our original Merter facility inadequate for our evolving needs. As part of our growth strategy, we repurposed the location as a 500-square-metre showroom while establishing a modern 1,000-square-metre production facility to support increasing demand and long-term development objectives. We have a highly flexible production capacity, capable of manufacturing both 500 units and up to 100,000 units depending on demand. We also work with subcontractors and have made



We stand behind our products and focus on delivering the highest quality at every stage.

substantial investments in this area. Additionally, we have a production facility project in Angola currently awaiting approval.

What differentiates you from your competitors?

Our most significant differentiator is our investment in digitalization. We are also an extremely agile company. For example, when a client contacts us, we respond within minutes. We actively seek out clients rather than waiting for them to come to us. In fact, we spent seven months of 2023 traveling internationally to meet partners and expand our network. Thanks to our digital investments, we have become highly accessible—but accessibility alone is not enough. The post-contact experience is equally critical. For instance, a soldier in Angola who wore our products ten years ago has since become a general and now wishes to procure uniforms from us again due to his satis-

faction. We stand behind our products and focus on delivering the highest quality at every stage. When we take on a project, it activates an entire ecosystem—from fabric suppliers to secondary manufacturers—which is incredibly rewarding. We truly enjoy what we do. All of this success has been achieved without incentives—purely through our own efforts. With greater support for exporters, we believe even stronger results could be achieved. For example, travel costs to African markets are extremely high, and visa barriers can create additional challenges. Reducing these burdens would significantly increase our business volume.

How would you describe your export market presence?

Our primary market is Africa, where we believe we have established a strong position. However, we are now targeting expansion into Latin America. Outside of this region, there are

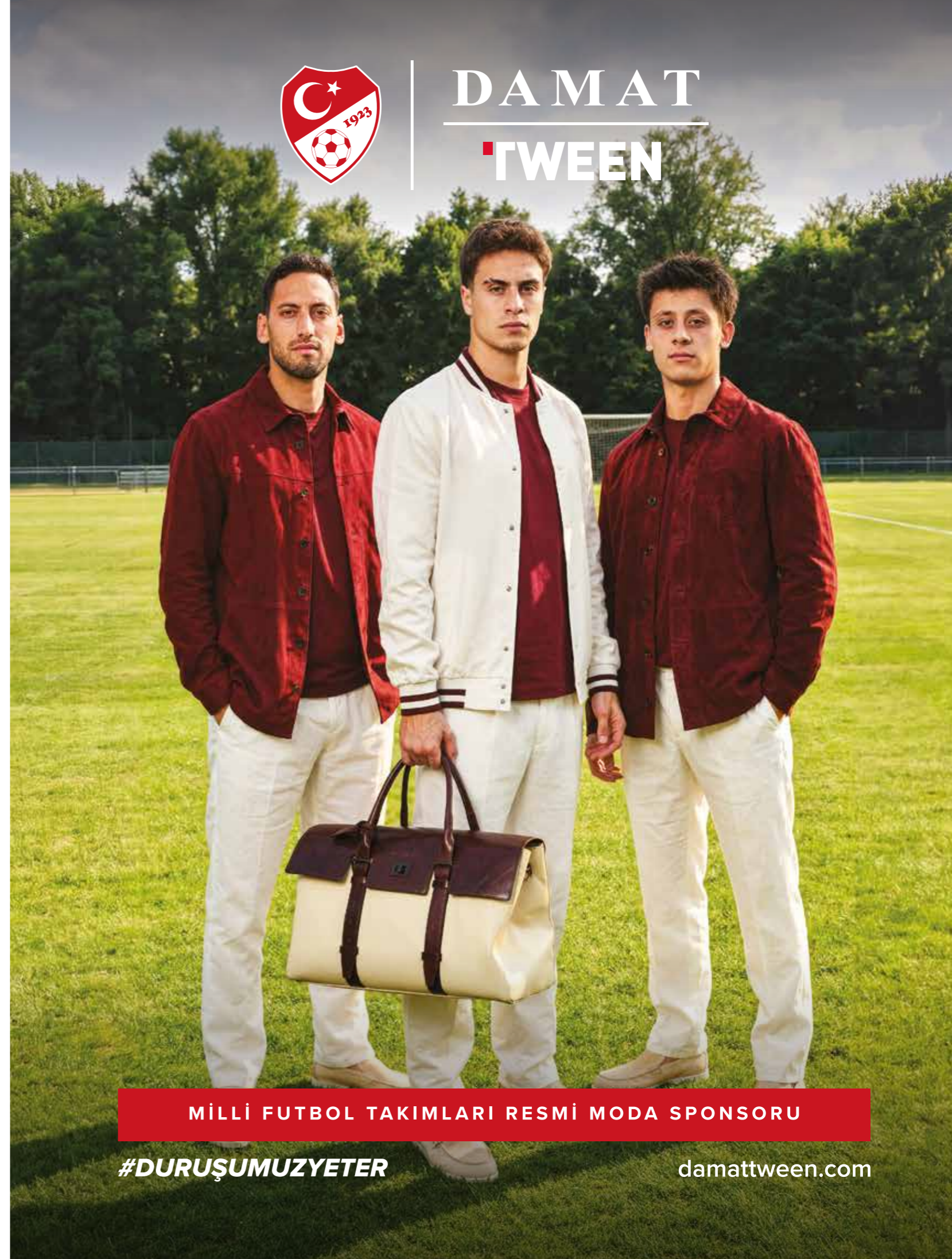
very few untapped markets left. We have already initiated discussions with Colombia, which represents a significant opportunity both for us and for Türkiye. By working with local partners, we are able to overcome time zone challenges and execute on-the-ground marketing strategies.

What are your short- and long-term goals?

In the short term, we are planning to establish a production hub in Nigeria with a local partner. We are also in discussions with countries such as Congo and Mauritania. In the long term, our focus is on entering the Latin American market. We have concentrated our sales strength and digital marketing capabilities on military apparel—a highly niche segment. Looking back, had we invested the same energy in large-scale consumer markets, our position today might be considerably different. Yet our priority has always been long-term value creation rather than short-term scale. Looking ahead, we intend to expand into new product segments and strengthen our portfolio. With competitive pressures expected to increase across global markets, continuous transformation, innovation, and adaptability will be critical to sustaining growth and maintaining a competitive edge.



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Kaan Özsökmen

General Manager of BabyNEO



WASHABLE DIAPERS REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT BY 40%

In an interview with İTKİB Hedef magazine, Kaan Özsökmen, General Manager of BabyNEO, discussed how the company's washable baby diapers contribute to value-added production while offering a more sustainable alternative that supports carbon footprint reduction and environmental responsibility.

What areas does BabyNEO operate in? Could you tell us about your washable baby diaper product?

As BabyNEO, we began our journey in 2003, producing for international clients' brands in Türkiye. In 2004, we were first introduced to washable baby diapers through a British client. Naturally, it seemed unusual at first—we wondered why products similar to those our mothers once used were in such high demand. While maintaining our production activities, we also invested considerable effort in research. We found that in developed markets such as the United Kingdom and the United States, these products had been widely used and trusted for more than three decades. As we explored the subject in greater depth, we came to recognize their significance not only in terms of infant health and comfort, but also for environmen-

tal sustainability and long-term cost savings for households. Ultimately, we asked ourselves: if modernized versions of these traditional products are preferred in advanced markets, why not in Türkiye? With this perspective, we established our own brand in 2008 and set out to introduce the product to the domestic market. While our product range has broadened over time, washable baby diapers have remained the cornerstone of our business. Research findings and clinical assessments consistently highlight their benefits—not only as a natural and health-supportive option for infants, but also as a sustainable solution that minimizes waste and promotes responsible resource consumption. At the same time, their reusability offers substantial economic advantages, enabling families to significantly reduce long-term



What is your production and export capacity? Which markets do you serve, and how is the global demand?

From a national perspective, domestic sales under our own brand remain relatively limited compared to the global market. Therefore, we primarily operate through private label manufacturing for international brands. Some brands sell between 20,000 and 50,000 units per month, while leading players in the category reach 60,000–70,000 units monthly. The market consists of hundreds of brands of varying scale—smaller ones often continue with local production, whereas we focus on high-volume partners.

Our biggest competitor is, of course, China. However, we differentiate ourselves through quality. Feedback from our clients consistently highlights that while our products may be priced higher, their quality is significantly superior. As a result, we continue to work with clients who prioritize quality over price.

Our key export markets include the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria. Feedback from our private label clients is extremely encouraging—not only do we manufacture according to their specifications, but we also contribute through R&D. Hearing their satisfaction with our products is highly rewarding.

Similarly, positive feedback from domestic consumers of our own brand is a source of pride. Com-

pared to international pricing, our products are more accessible in Türkiye—not by compromising on quality, but by operating with lower margins. Our primary goal is to ensure that families in Türkiye can access these products just as easily as those in developed markets, and to increase overall adoption. We balance profitability largely through our private label operations.

What do you prioritize in your production processes? Could you elaborate on materials and certifications?

First and foremost, we ensure that every material we use holds international certification. We prioritize producing durable, high-quality products so that

families can reuse them for a second child—or even pass them on to others.

Over the years, we have heard from families who have used our products even for a third child. The certifications of the materials we use guarantee that there are no harmful chemicals that could affect infant health. This is so critical to us that we require certification even for sewing threads and labels.

From day one, we have adhered to a simple principle: “We do not produce anything we would not use ourselves.” In fact, we used these products personally and raised our own child with them.

Compared with conventional production methods, our manufacturing processes use 3.5 times less energy and 8.3 times fewer non-recyclable raw materials. They also result in 60 times less solid waste and 2.3 times lower wastewater generation, supporting a substantially more sustainable production model.

BabyNEO products contribute to sustainability?

Research conducted internationally shows that, first and foremost, no trees are cut during our production process. By contrast, over 7 million trees are reportedly cut each year for disposable diapers.

Our production model delivers substantial environmental benefits, including 3.5 times lower energy consumption, 8.3 times fewer non-recyclable raw materials, 60 times less solid waste, and 2.3 times lower wastewater generation. Moreover, water recovered from large-scale washing operations is treated and reused in irrigation systems and other secondary applications, reinforcing our

commitment to circularity, resource conservation, and sustainable manufacturing.

Research indicates that around five billion diapers are discarded annually, with a substantial proportion ending up in landfills or being incinerated. Incineration, however, presents serious environmental concerns due to the potential release of dioxins, which are widely recognized as highly toxic pollutants. As a result, many European countries have introduced financial incentives and reimbursement schemes for families who choose washable diapers, recognizing their contribution to reducing pressure on public waste management systems.

As you look to the future, what new products, innovations, or developments can we expect from your company?

We draw inspiration from traditional products long used in Anatolia but often overlooked. In essence, what we do is modernize a product that originates from our own culture—yet has been more widely embraced in Europe. Building on our accumulated expertise, we continuously work to improve all our products. As a team, we constantly brainstorm how to make them better, more functional, healthier, and more sustainable. We actively develop samples and explore new product categories.

One such extension is washable feminine hygiene products, which align closely with our washable diaper line. Like our diapers, these products protect both women’s health and the environment—without compromising daily comfort. We also have additional projects in development along similar lines.

Reusability reduces environmental impact. How do





Özlem İkişik Barutçu
Founder of Su Espadril



“THE ONLY BRAND PRODUCING ESPADRILLE SOLES IN TÜRKİYE”

As the founder of Su Espadril—the only brand in Türkiye producing authentic espadrille soles in its own atelier through traditional Spanish methods and meticulous handcraftsmanship—Özlem İkişik Barutçu explains the essence of the brand: “Each pair is crafted with deep respect for nature, heritage, and the artistry of handmade production.”

Could you tell us about your journey into the footwear industry and the founding of Karma Shoes and Su Espadril?

My relationship with the footwear industry goes back to my earliest years. As the daughter of Ercan İkişik, founder of Beta Shoes, I was exposed to every aspect of the business from a very young age. What began as childhood curiosity while spending time in production workshops gradually evolved into a genuine passion and professional calling. Determined to build on this foundation, I studied Stage Design and Costume at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University before continuing my education in Italy, where I specialized in footwear. During this period, I gained extensive knowledge in design, collection development, buying, and retail, all of which continue to inform my work today.

In 2014, I left our family company and went on to serve as General Manager of Divarese and Nine West for approximately eight years. With the onset of the pandemic, I returned to our legacy footwear machinery and established my own business. We began producing espadrilles—a niche product category—creating something that had not previously been manufactured in Türkiye. We offer both wholesale and retail products that are entirely natural, sustainable, and rooted in women’s craftsmanship. Each pair is produced through labor-intensive, handcraft-driven processes, grounded in respect for both nature and human effort.

Su Espadril is the only producer of jute shoe soles and Spanish-style handmade espadrilles in Türkiye. How did the idea of



combining Spanish tradition with Turkish craftsmanship emerge?

I wanted to create something more niche and distinctive. Today, as Su Espadril, we are the only brand in Türkiye producing authentic espadrille soles in-house using traditional Spanish techniques. Handcraft remains exceptionally strong in Türkiye and can be achieved at more accessible costs compared to Europe. For this reason, I place particular emphasis on women’s labor. We currently collaborate with more than 100 women who hand-stitch from their homes, and the majority of our sole production team is also made up of women. The fabrics we use are locally sourced—from cities such as Bursa, Kastamonu, and Denizli—produced from natural cotton. Türkiye’s high-quality textile

heritage aligns perfectly with this production philosophy. My goal is to sustain authentic espadrille production through natural methods, provide economic and social support to women, and expand this model of solidarity. By reinterpreting geographically indicated cultural assets through contemporary design, we ensure their continuity while appealing to younger generations.

What is your current production and export scale? Which are your key target markets?

As Su Espadril, we actively participate in trade fairs both domestically and internationally to expand our reach. We have been exhibiting at the AYMOD Footwear Fair for years, and MICAM in Milan—where we will participate for the third time this year—is a particularly valuable platform for our global expansion.

In March, marking our fifth anniversary, we took a significant step forward by opening our first physical store alongside our online platform (www.suespadril.com). Located in Nişantaşı, Istanbul, our store serves both retail and wholesale customers, while also functioning as the hub for our e-commerce operations. Our target markets naturally align with regions that embrace Aegean and Mediterranean lifestyles. Within Türkiye, the Aegean and Mediterranean regions form our core customer base. Internationally, key markets include France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Tunisia. Interest in our products continues to grow in major U.S. markets, including Miami and Los Angeles. In parallel, we are actively pursuing export opportunities in the Middle East, where markets such as Dubai and Qatar are demonstrating significant potential.

As a designer, what do you prioritize when creating your collections? How do global trends influence your work?

When developing our collections, we closely monitor global fashion trends—color palettes, material choices, and detailing are always on our radar. However, we are careful not to be solely trend-driven, maintaining the unique identity and spirit of Su Espadril. One of our most important sources of inspiration is geographically indicated cultural products. We see these as both heritage and opportunity—reinterpreting them through a contemporary lens. One notable example from this summer was the integration of Kastamonu’s geographically protected stone-printing technique into our collections. Through a collaboration with Derimod, we launched a capsule collection of espadrilles and bags that brought together natural materials, heritage textiles, and the skilled work of women artisans. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the project represented a meaningful contribution to cultural preservation and social impact. In the future, we aim to expand this approach by developing new capsule collections that highlight regional heritage, traditional craftsmanship, and sustainable natural materials, creating products with both cultural significance and contemporary relevance.

We will continue participating in global trade fairs and seek collaborations with both boutique retailers and larger global retail groups.

ity of heritage with the relevance of contemporary values have become increasingly important in defining modern luxury.

Where do you see the brand in the future?

Looking ahead, we aim to position Su Espadril more prominently on international platforms. We will continue participating in global trade fairs and seek collaborations

with both boutique retailers and larger global retail groups. Our core objective is to keep producing, to create employment for women, to make labor visible, and to grow through these values. Moving forward, Su Espadril will remain guided by a philosophy that celebrates the essence of craftsmanship, honours the value of labor, empowers women, and fosters a harmonious relationship with nature.



TÜRKİYE INNOVATION WEEK

A 12-YEAR JOURNEY POWERING TÜRKİYE'S INNOVATION TRANSFORMATION



Türkiye Innovation Week (TIW) continues to serve as the meeting point of a powerful 12-year transformation in the country's innovation-driven production journey.

Türkiye's ambition to transform its manufacturing strength into a high value-added production model has been advancing through a strong innovation-oriented vision in recent years. As one of the most significant platforms representing this vision, Türkiye Innovation Week has evolved far beyond a conventional event; it has become one of the symbolic platforms of Türkiye's technology, entrepreneurship, R&D, and export-oriented transformation. Organized by the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM) with the support of the Ministry of Trade, Türkiye Innovation Week has brought together entrepreneurs,

industrialists, technology leaders, academics, investors, and young talents under a shared vision for the future throughout its 12-year journey. Today, Türkiye Innovation Week stands not only as one of Türkiye's leading innovation platforms, but also as a significant regional hub shaping the broader innovation agenda.

Türkiye's Leading Innovation Gathering

Since its launch in 2012, Türkiye Innovation Week has played a vital role in strengthening the country's innovation culture through its growing participation, expanding ecosystem, and

Türkiye Innovation Week has played a vital role in strengthening the country's innovation culture since its launch in 2012.

increasing international impact. Over time, the event has evolved into a comprehensive innovation ecosystem where collaborations are established, startups grow, technology investments take shape, and young generations find inspiration.

Innovation: The Driving Force Behind High Value-Added Production

In today's global economy, competitiveness is no longer defined solely by manufacturing capacity, but increasingly by the ability to develop technology, design, digitalization, and innovation. In line with this transformation, Türkiye has built a strong innovation infrastructure in recent years:

- 1,357 R&D centers
- 342 design centers
- 113 technology development zones
- 419 domestic artificial intelligence startups

Türkiye's steady rise in the Global Innovation Index also reflects this progress. According to the 2025 rankings, Türkiye rose to 49th place among 139 countries and became one of the nations showing the strongest improvement since 2013.

As Trade Minister Ömer Bolat emphasized:

"All activities that increase added value — innovation and R&D initiatives — are extremely valuable for us. The increase in Türkiye's export unit value clearly demonstrates the direct

contribution of high technology and innovation investments to the economy."

Global Visionaries Shaping the Future on the Same Stage

Since its inception, Türkiye Innovation Week has developed into a premier global gathering, convening prominent figures from business, science, technology, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, and the creative sectors to explore the transforma-

tive forces shaping the future. The event has hosted technology leaders, academics, entrepreneurs, investors, artists, and international thought leaders from around the world. During the 2025 edition, distinguished names from various disciplines — including Pierluigi Collina, Ken Munro, Serdar Kuzuloğlu, Selçuk Şirin, Sinan Canan, and Beyhan Budak — shared insights on the future. This diversity reflects Türkiye





TİM Chairman Mustafa Gültepe highlighted that the event continues to grow every year with broader participation and more ambitious goals, reinforcing Türkiye's global competitiveness through innovation.



Over the years, Türkiye Innovation Week has become a defining element of Türkiye's innovation legacy, serving as a catalyst for new ideas, collaboration, and technological advancement. Looking ahead, the platform aims to broaden its global footprint and further elevate its influence within the international innovation community.



Türkiye Innovation Week continues to stand as one of the country's most powerful innovation platforms.

Over the Past 11 Years:

- More than 570,000 participants hosted
- 10 million digital engagements achieved
- 1,125 speakers featured
- More than 600 companies awarded through innovation programs

Innovation Week's multidimensional character, positioning it not only as a technology-focused platform but also as a space addressing people, culture, and social transformation.

Strengthening Türkiye's Vision for the Future

During the 2025 edition of the event, Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz emphasized that innovation is one of the most critical pillars of Türkiye's development strategy, describing Türkiye Innovation Week as one of the strongest rep-

resentations of this vision. Meanwhile, TİM Chairman Mustafa Gültepe highlighted that the event continues to grow every year with broader participation and more ambitious goals, reinforcing Türkiye's global competitiveness through innovation. Türkiye Innovation Week has become a leading platform for defining and advancing Türkiye's future-oriented agenda, bringing together stakeholders to explore opportunities in artificial intelligence, digital transformation, sustainability, advanced manu-

facturing, entrepreneurship, and technology-driven exports.

Eyes Now on 2026

With 12 years of accumulated experience, Türkiye Innovation Week has become an integral part of Türkiye's innovation memory and aims to expand its global influence even further in the coming years. The 13th edition of Türkiye Innovation Week, planned for October 2026, is expected to:

- attract broader international participation,

- focus more strongly on artificial intelligence and advanced technologies,
- bring together a greater number of entrepreneurs and investors,
- inspire next-generation manufacturing models,
- and further promote Türkiye's high value-added production vision on a global scale.

Innovation is no longer a concept reserved for the future; it has become a fundamental determinant of competitiveness,

industrial capability, and sustainable growth in the present day. As the pace of transformation accelerates, the ability to innovate has emerged as a key source of economic and strategic advantage. Against this backdrop, Türkiye Innovation Week continues to play a pivotal role as one of the nation's foremost innovation platforms, bringing together visionary leaders, pioneering ideas, and transformative technologies that contribute to shaping the future.

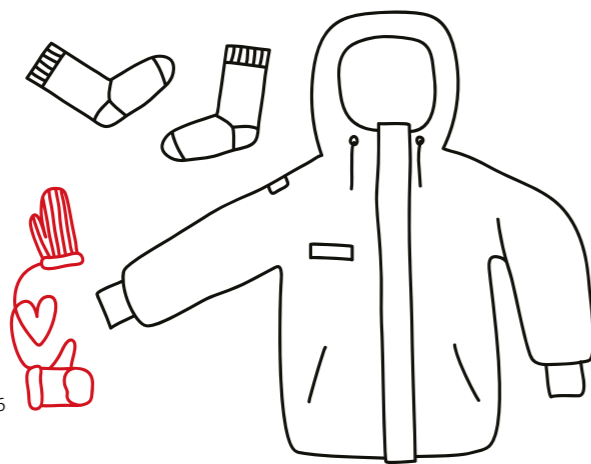
Türkiye

STRENGTHENS ITS POSITION IN

technical textiles

as exports

continue to grow



Türkiye is reinforcing its position in the global technical textiles market, as exports maintain a steady upward trajectory despite ongoing volatility in global demand.



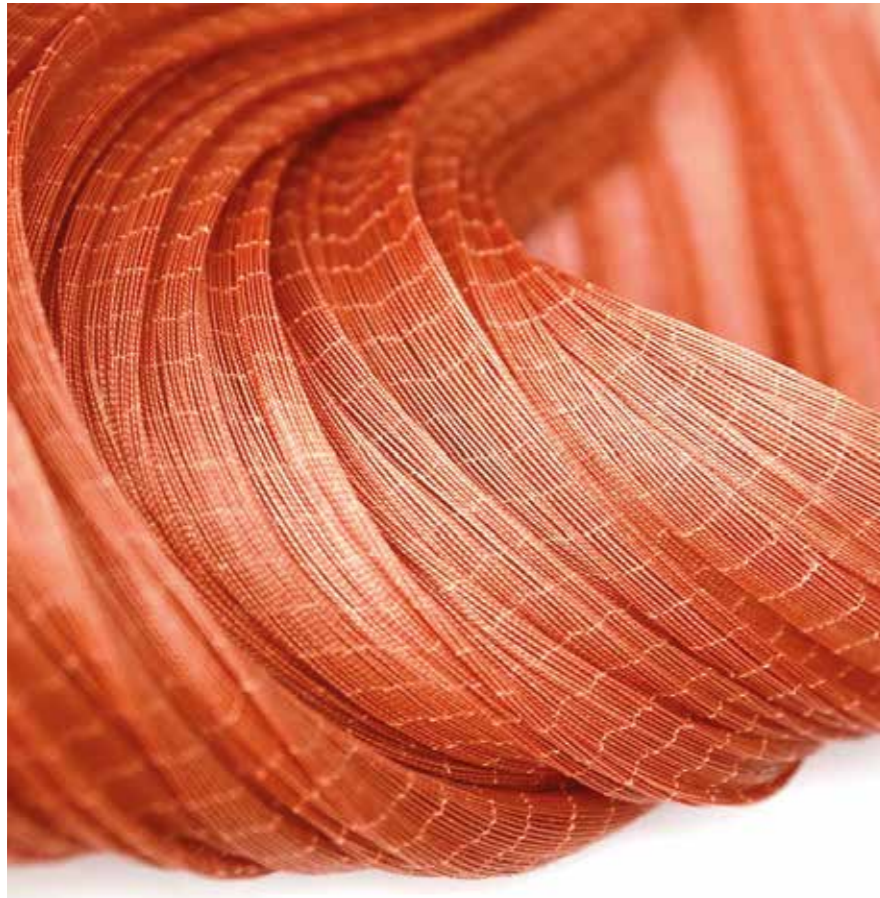
According to the Global Technical Textiles Trade Report 2024, worldwide technical textile exports reached \$119.1 billion, marking a modest 1.3% increase year-on-year. China maintained its position as the dominant player in the global market, accounting for 28.1% of total exports with a value of \$33.5 billion. It was followed by Germany with a 7.4% market share and the United States with 6.9%, both of which recorded modest declines in export value during the period. Within this competitive landscape, Türkiye ranked 14th globally, holding a 2% share. The coun-

try's technical textile exports rose from \$2.26 billion in 2024 to \$2.33 billion in 2025, reflecting a 2.8% increase and signaling continued resilience in a challenging market environment.

The US Consolidates Leadership as Africa Emerges

Despite global demand fluctuations, Türkiye's export performance underscores the strategic importance of technical textiles in its broader trade portfolio. The United States remained Türkiye's largest export destination, with shipments increasing by 10.2% to nearly \$282 million, further strengthening its leading

position. The most striking growth, however, was recorded in Morocco, where exports surged by 42.8%, reaching \$73.7 million. This sharp increase highlights North Africa's emergence as a high-growth region for Turkish technical textiles. Across Europe, Poland (+14.8%) and the United Kingdom (+12.9%) delivered strong performances, while Czechia (+9.4%) and Spain (+5.3%) also contributed to growth. In contrast, traditional core markets such as Germany (-5.2%) and Romania (-5.4%) experienced contraction. Taken together, the data points to a geographical shift in export



Türkiye's technical textile exports reached \$1.9 billion during the January–October 2025 period, marking a 4.5% increase compared with the same period of the previous year. The growth reflects the sector's resilience and its expanding role in global markets, supported by rising demand for high-value, innovation-driven textile solutions.



The 2025 data signals two key structural shifts within Türkiye's technical textile industry.

- Wadding and felt products: +12.6%
 - Twine, ropes, and cords: +6.0%
- Meanwhile, nonwoven fabrics—the sector's largest product category—retained their leading position, recording a 6.9% increase in exports, driven by sustained demand across a wide range of industrial applications. Packaging solutions produced from technical textiles also delivered strong performance, combining high export volumes with steady growth and reinforcing their importance within the sector's product portfolio.

A Structural Shift in the Sector

The 2025 data signals two key structural shifts within Türkiye's technical textile industry. First, exports are gradually moving away from traditional Western European markets toward more

dynamic regions, reflecting both demand changes and diversification strategies. Second, growth is increasingly concentrated in industrial-use and high value-added product segments, indicating a transition toward more advanced and specialized production. Industry experts note that this evolution strengthens Türkiye's competitive positioning, as the sector expands its product range and focuses on innovation-driven exports.

Imports Decline as Global Trade Slows

On the import side, global technical textile imports declined by 6.5% in 2024, falling to \$112.7 billion. The United States remained the largest importer with a 13.8% share, followed by Germany, Mex-

ico, and China. Türkiye ranked 19th globally, with imports decreasing by 5% to \$1.7 billion, reflecting both softer demand and a potential shift toward domestic production.

Outlook

Despite ongoing global uncertainties, technical textiles continue to stand out as one of the most resilient and strategically important segments within Türkiye's textile industry. The combination of market diversification, growing demand across emerging regions, and an increasing focus on high-value-added production indicates that the sector is well positioned to maintain its growth momentum in the years ahead. These dynamics are expected to strengthen its global competitiveness and support long-term, sustainable expansion.



momentum, increasingly concentrated in the US, North Africa, and Central/Eastern Europe.

High-Value Product Segments Drive Growth

A closer look at product categories reveals that growth is being driven by specialized, high-value

technical applications rather than volume-based commodities. The strongest increases were recorded in:

- Rubber threads and cords: +39.6%
- Safety seat belts: +33.3%
- Technical textile-based apparel: +25.3%



A Global Power In Towels

Türkiye ranks among the world's leading towel exporters, competing not through low-cost production, but through its commitment to premium quality, craftsmanship, and value-added manufacturing.

Crafted In Türkiye. Chosen Worldwide

Turkish towels are redefining value through exceptional quality, superior craftsmanship, and rapid responsiveness to global market demands.

Exporting Comfort to 150+ Countries

Turkish Towels, trusted worldwide.

FROM AN OTTOMAN TRADITION TO A GLOBAL PREMIUM CATEGORY...

Once an integral part of Ottoman bath culture, Turkish towels have evolved into a global hallmark of quality, spanning from London to New York, and from luxury resorts to premium home textile brands. Today, Turkish towels represent far more than a textile product. They embody a rich heritage of craftsmanship, deep-rooted production know-how, and Türkiye's expanding position as a leading player in the global premium textile segment.

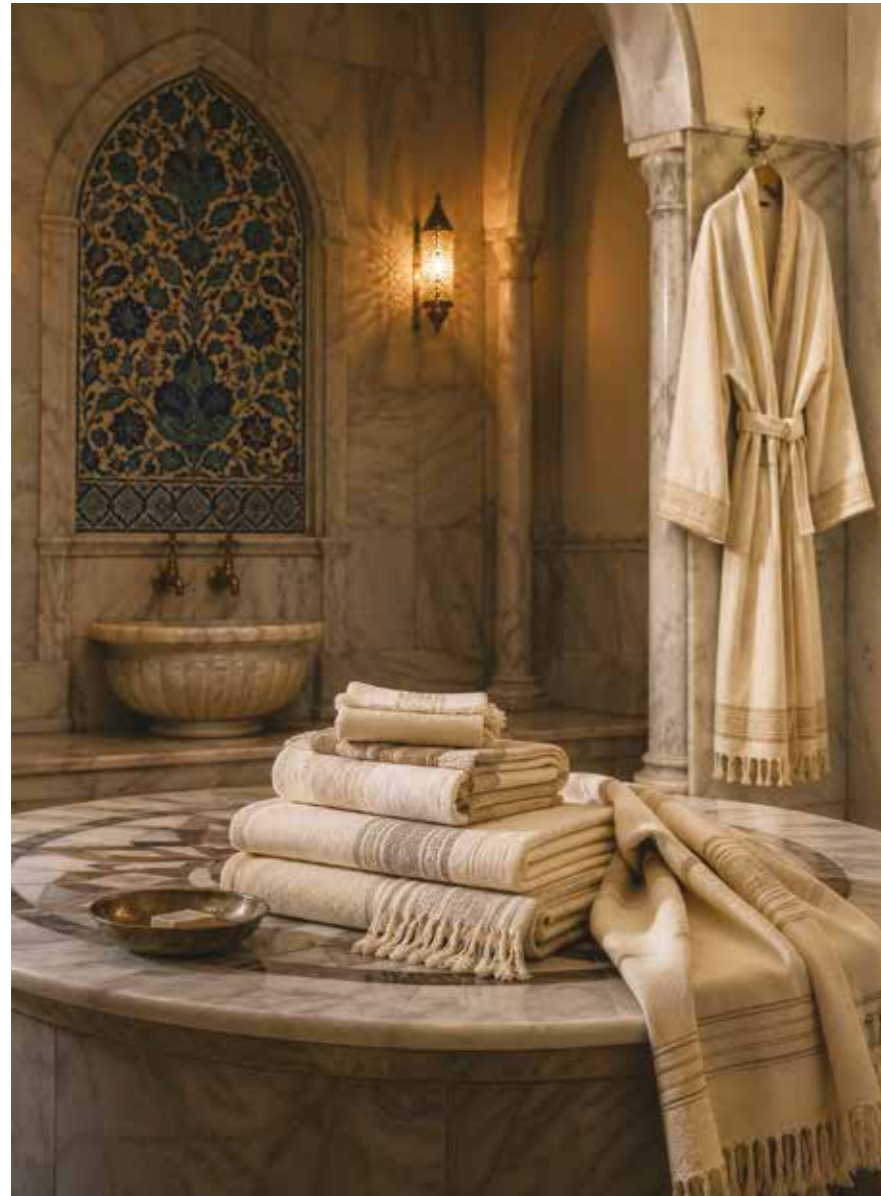
When discussing the fashion industry, the spotlight often falls on denim, technical textiles or apparel. Yet one of Türkiye's most quietly powerful competitive advantages has been shaping bathrooms across the world for decades: Turkish Towels. What was once an indispensable element of Ottoman palaces, traditional hammams, and everyday life has evolved into a globally recognized product category with a strong presence across international hospitality chains, premium retail markets, and the luxury home textiles segment. More importantly, Türkiye's success in this field is driven not only by its manufacturing capacity, but also by its ability to deliver quality, speed, flexibility, and design excellence simultaneously. The scale of this transformation became particularly evident in 2025. During the year, Türkiye's towel exports reached approximately \$542 million, while bathrobe exports totaled \$203 million. These figures underscore the country's enduring competi-



Turkish Towels are no longer simply a textile product—they embody heritage, craftsmanship and Türkiye's growing premium manufacturing strength.

tiveness and growing influence in the global market for premium home textile products. Of the country's combined \$745 million towel and bathrobe exports, \$546 million was generated by Denizli alone—meaning nearly 73 percent of Türkiye's exports in this category originat-

ed from a single city. The story of Turkish towels is not merely one of industrial success—it is a testament to Anatolia's enduring cultural exchange with the world. Rooted in centuries of tradition and refined through generations of craftsmanship, Turkish towels embody a unique heritage that



Denizli: The City Dressing the World's Bathroo

At the heart of Türkiye's global strength in towels and bathrobes lies one city: Denizli.

Increasing exports by 7 percent to \$4.7 billion in 2025, Denizli's textile and apparel sector became the city's export engine, accounting for \$1.37 billion in trade volume. Yet Denizli is much more than a manufacturing hub—it is a sophisticated textile ecosystem built over decades of accumulated know-how, technological advancement, and a strong culture of innovation.

In 2025 alone, the city exported \$412 million worth of towels to 108 countries, \$134 million worth of bathrobes to 91 countries, and \$250 million worth of bed linen to 96 markets. Its strong positioning in high-value markets such as the UK, US, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy further underlines its global competitiveness.

What differentiates Denizli, however, is not scale alone. Its fully integrated structure—from spinning and weaving to

continues to find relevance and appreciation in contemporary global markets. Known globally today as "Turkish Towels," these products trace their roots back to the "peşkir" tradition, a textile deeply embedded in Anatolian culture for centuries. Historical references date back to the Seljuk era, while under the Ottoman Empire, towels evolved from functional necessities into refined objects

of craftsmanship and aesthetic expression. By the 18th and 19th centuries, they evolved from silk-embroidered pieces into cotton-based, highly functional textiles, increasingly recognised for their absorbency, durability and softness. Today, Turkish Towels have become a globally recognised category where artisanal heritage meets industrial innovation.

Denizli alone accounts for 73 percent of Türkiye's \$745 million towel and bathrobe exports.



Türkiye's global strength in towels and bathrobes maintained its momentum during the first four months of 2026.

Turkish towels made a strong start to 2026

Türkiye's global strength in towels and bathrobes maintained its momentum during the first four months of 2026.

During the January–April period, Türkiye's cotton terry towel exports are estimated at approximately \$175 million, while bathrobe and dressing gown exports approached \$62 million. Together, these two core product segments generated nearly \$237 million in export revenue. Denizli once again emerged as a key contributor to this achievement, underscoring its strategic importance within Türkiye's home textiles industry. During the first four months of the year, the city generated approximately \$133 million in towel exports and \$41 million in bathrobe exports, accounting for nearly 73 percent of Türkiye's total exports in these categories.

dyeing, finishing and confection—creates a system capable of combining short lead times, small-batch production and premium quality. As a result, many global brands increasingly view Denizli not merely as a sourcing destination, but as a product development and solution partner. Today, nearly 90 percent of Türkiye's towel, bathrobe and bed linen production is concentrated in Denizli, illustrating the extraordi-

nary scale of this manufacturing cluster.

Türkiye Is Not a Low-Cost Player

Explaining Türkiye's success in towels and bathrobes solely through production capacity would be incomplete. The real transformation has taken place in value creation. Today, Türkiye is no longer competing in the same lane as China, Pakistan or Bangladesh. The

Türkiye continues to stand out as one of the world’s most capable manufacturing hubs and preferred private-label partners, leveraging its deep production expertise, agile supply chains, and commitment to quality to serve international markets.



Best home textile products; they have become a critical component of the wellness, tourism and luxury retail economy.

conversation has shifted from “Who can produce cheaper?” to “Who can produce better, faster and more sustainably?” This transition is clearly reflected in export values.

- In Denizli:
- Export value per kilogram in towels: \$9.7
 - Export value per kilogram in bathrobes: approximately \$15
 - Export value per kilogram in bed linen: \$10.5

Across these three product groups, the average export value reaches \$12 per kilogram, significantly above Türkiye’s overall export average of \$1.56 per kilogram. In other words, Denizli is not

only producing more—it is producing more value.

The Invisible Standard of Luxury Hospitality

One of the strongest growth drivers behind Turkish Towels is the hospitality economy. Today, for luxury resorts, wellness destinations, spa chains and premium accommodation brands, high-quality towels and bathrobes have become an invisible yet essential component of the guest experience. The ability to retain softness, absorbency and comfort—even after hundreds of washes—has become a defining purchasing criterion in the premium seg-

ment. Turkish manufacturers stand out through three core advantages:

- Premium-quality cotton
- Flexible and fast production capabilities
- Proximity-driven sourcing advantages for Europe

Following the pandemic, as global brands increasingly moved away from fragile and extended supply chains toward nearshoring models, Türkiye’s strategic importance intensified further. Today, Turkish Towels are no longer just home textile products; they have become a critical component of the wellness, tourism and luxury retail economy.

The Next Threshold: Creating Global Brands

Despite its unquestionable strength in towel and bathrobe manufacturing, Türkiye still faces one critical challenge: Why has one of the world’s leading producers yet to create towel brands with comparable global recognition? Although many premium towels and bathrobes are produced in Türkiye, much of the consumer-facing brand equity still belongs to international names. Türkiye continues to stand out primarily as a highly capable manufacturer and private-label partner. According to industry leaders,

the next leap forward will not come from scaling production capacity further, but from transforming Turkish Towels into a stronger global brand narrative. As İHKİB President Mustafa Paşahan frequently emphasizes, Türkiye’s apparel industry is entering a new era—one shaped by the principles of accessible luxury, rapid responsiveness, and uncompromising quality. In an increasingly competitive global market, these strengths are emerging as key differentiators that reinforce the sector’s international positioning and long-term growth potential. And if Türkiye already dresses the world’s bathrooms today, it may soon do so increasingly under its own brands.



THE DIGITAL LEAP OF TURKISH FASHION GIANTS



Turkish fashion brands are redefining every stage of the value chain—from design and production to supply chain management and customer experience—through the integration of artificial intelligence and data-driven technologies. These strategic investments are not only enhancing global competitiveness but also establishing new standards for speed, agility, and hyper-personalization. Across the industry, digital transformation has evolved from a competitive advantage into a fundamental driver of growth, innovation, and long-term value creation.

► Zeynep Tütüncü Güngör

As the global fashion industry is being reshaped around speed and data, Turkish brands are not merely keeping pace—they are rewriting the rules through strategic technology investments. From AI-powered design processes and smart manufacturing systems to real-time consumer analytics platforms and “phygital” retail experiences, these advancements are elevating operational efficiency while deepening customer engagement. Today, Turkish fashion players are strengthening their position in global markets not only through the products they create, but through technology-integrated business models that deliver greater speed, agility, and customer-centric innovation. As digital transformation reshapes the industry, Türkiye’s fashion ecosystem is increasingly distinguishing itself through its ability to combine manufacturing excellence with technological sophistication.

LC Waikiki: Cutting Design-to-Store Time to Six Weeks

Operating in 60 countries with 1,300 stores and e-commerce platforms in 21 markets, LC Waikiki continues to scale its technology investments to deliver the right product, at the right time, through the right channel. Since accelerating its tech infrastructure investments in 2023, the brand introduced Elsva,

Türkiye’s first AI-powered digital style advisor, enabling customers to discover personalized outfits via its website. With over \$20 million invested in digital transformation, LC Waikiki has reengineered its design, production, and supply chain processes. Leveraging data-driven insights, the brand has reduced its design-to-store cycle to as little as six weeks. Real-time analysis

of customer feedback and sales data feeds directly into product development. A centralized cloud-based system now manages e-commerce operations across 21 countries. Internally developed AI tools, including LCWGPT, empower employees across departments with advanced analytics and decision-support capabilities. “Customer Radar” enable brands

Internally developed AI tools, including LCWGPT, empower employees across departments with advanced analytics and decision-support capabilities.





Alongside sustainability, DESA has revamped its digital platforms, offering a faster, more intuitive, and design-led user experience.

to identify unmet consumer demand in real time, allowing valuable insights to be integrated directly into production planning and decision-making processes. In-store operations have also become significantly more efficient, with proprietary software reducing checkout times by up to 40%. At the same time, nearly 40% of product im-

agery is now generated using artificial intelligence, demonstrating the growing role of AI in enhancing both operational efficiency and customer engagement.

DeFacto: Data and AI at the Core of Its Vision

With over 500 stores globally, DeFacto places AI and data at

the heart of its “DeFacto 5.0” vision. Its AI-powered “Mix & Match” styling service offers personalized outfit recommendations, while advanced analytics enable the brand to predict product demand across regions, price points, and timeframes. The company’s agile “Fast React” infrastructure allows it to translate trends into both online and offline channels within just two weeks.

In 2025, DeFacto’s 4,000-square-meter flagship store in Adana redefined experiential retail. Customers can design their own products in the “Your Design” area, supported by AI-driven recommendations—blending physical retail with digital personalization. The brand has also invested in phygital retail in Berlin, integrating VR, AR, and robotics. Through AI Studio and virtual

Advanced predictive models and marketing automation tools enable Mavi to optimize campaign investments, boost customer satisfaction, and drive loyalty and profitability.



Through its innovation-driven “All Blue” collection—featuring recycled and organic materials—Mavi continues to push the boundaries of denim innovation.

model technologies, DeFacto has reduced content production timelines from days to hours—enabling e-commerce visuals to be created even before physical production begins.

Mavi: Strengthening CRM Through Data and AI

Operating across 34 countries, Mavi continues to refine its operations through data analytics and AI-driven CRM systems. By integrating online and offline channels since 2018, the brand has built a sophisticated customer insight engine that informs both product and marketing strategies.

Advanced predictive models and marketing automation tools enable Mavi to optimize campaign investments, boost customer satisfaction, and drive loyalty and profitability. Artificial intelligence is also playing an increas-

ingly important role in product description generation, content creation, talent acquisition, and customer engagement, enabling brands to streamline operations while delivering more personalized experiences.

Meanwhile, through its innovation-driven “All Blue” collection, which incorporates recycled and organic materials, Mavi continues to push the boundaries of denim innovation. By combining sustainability with advanced product development, the company is reinforcing its commitment to responsible production and shaping the future of the denim industry.

DESA: Advancing Sustainable Leather Through Technology

With 54 stores and a growing international footprint, DESA is investing heavily in sustainable material innovation. Its



Today, Turkish fashion players are emerging as stronger global contenders, driven not only by the products they create but also by technology-integrated business models that enhance efficiency, agility, and customer engagement.



2,000-square-meter R&D and production facility in Tuscany reinforces its ambition in the luxury segment.

A recent partnership with the Gozen Institute focuses on developing next-generation, biodegradable, non-animal materials. Alongside sustainability, DESA has revamped its digital platforms, offering a faster, more intuitive, and design-led user experience.

Derimod: Technology at the Core of Operations

Derimod, with nearly 120 stores globally, positions digitalization not as a function but as the foundation of its entire business. From supply chain management and design to logistics and customer experience, the company

is investing in end-to-end digital optimization across its entire value chain. This commitment to innovation is deeply rooted in its history. As early as 2007, the introduction of nano-leather technology enabled a significant reduction in garment weight, marking an important milestone in product development. Today, the company continues to advance material innovation through sustained R&D investments, developing next-generation solutions

FLO: Driving Transformation Through AI, IoT, and RPA

Operating in 30 countries with over 800 stores, FLO established its technology arm in 2023 to accelerate digital transformation. The company is im-

plementing AI, IoT, and robotic process automation across all business functions.

Its AI-powered assistant, FLO Wise, enhances customer satisfaction by analyzing product history, defect patterns, supplier performance, and customer behavior in real time. By transforming large volumes of data into actionable insights, the system supports more informed decision-making and continuous improvements across operations.

FLO has also successfully integrated its physical stores with e-commerce platforms, creating a seamless omnichannel experience. Through virtual basket technology, customers can conveniently purchase products that are unavailable

in-store, ensuring greater product accessibility and a more flexible shopping journey. The brand continues to lead in accessibility innovation, offering voice-enabled digital experiences for visually impaired customers.

Koton: Creating Impact with AI Influencer Pera

Koton has embraced AI not only in design but also in storytelling. Following its AI-designed collections and metaverse runway shows, the brand introduced Pera, a fully AI-generated virtual influencer. Launched in 2025, Pera represents Koton's forward-looking identity, bridging digital and physical fashion while promoting new collections.

Penti: Innovation at the Intersection of Comfort and Technology

Operating in 40 countries, Penti blends AI with product innovation and marketing. Its campaigns combine AI-generated visuals with real photography, while digital fashion shows experiment with hybrid realities. At the core of its product development lies Penti Lab, where products undergo rigorous testing. Innovations such as “no-show” underwear, ladder-resistant tights, and shaping hosiery highlight the brand's commitment to comfort through technology.

Orka Holding: AI-Powered Smart Manufacturing

Orka Holding, owner of Damat Tween and D'S Damat, is redefin-

ing menswear production through AI-powered personalization. Its smart factory integrates Industry 4.0 technologies, enabling custom-fit production at scale. Using AI-based sizing algorithms, the company delivers tailored garments with the efficiency of mass production—significantly increasing export value per kilogram.

Kıgılı & Colin's: Scaling Technology Investments

Kıgılı continues to invest in AI and machine learning to optimize operations and deliver personalized customer experiences, while also exploring metaverse and NFT initiatives.

Colin's, on the other hand, leverages AI to forecast product demand a year in advance, improving inventory turnover by up to 15%.



IMA AND THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, AND VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION

The Turkish fashion industry is being reshaped through digitalization and artificial intelligence. Standing at the intersection of fashion, technology, and innovation, Istanbul Moda Akademisi (IMA) is shaping more than future designers. It is cultivating a new generation of professionals who can harness data, embrace emerging technol-

ogies, and generate meaningful added value in an increasingly competitive global industry.

A New Paradigm in Fashion: The Evolution of the Value Chain

In recent years, the global fashion industry has moved beyond a structure driven solely by aesthetics and design, redefining itself along the axes of technology,

data, and sustainability. For countries like Türkiye, with a strong manufacturing infrastructure, this transformation presents a significant opportunity: the transition from low-cost production to high value-added production. As the fashion industry undergoes a profound transformation, digitalization, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and advanced manufacturing technologies have moved to the forefront of innovation. These capabilities are now among the most important factors influencing competitiveness across global markets. Technology has become deeply embedded in every aspect of the industry—from design and production to logistics, marketing, and consumer engagement—reshaping business models and redefining the future of fashion. It is precisely at this point of inflection that Istanbul Moda Akademisi (IMA) stands out as one of the pioneers of transformation within Türkiye's fashion industry, driven by its educational model and strong industry collaborations.

IMA: An Integrated Model from Creativity to Technology

With its interdisciplinary approach to fashion education, IMA offers not only design-focused training but a learning ecosystem enriched by technology. This model goes beyond traditional fashion education, encouraging students to think both creatively and analytically. Within the curriculum, key components include:

- Digital design tools
- 3D modeling and virtual prototyping
- AI-supported trend analysis
- Data-driven collection development

Through this approach, students are trained not only with aesthetic sensibilities, but as professionals who interpret market dynamics, make data-informed decisions, and develop sustainable solutions. As a result, graduates are equipped to compete within the global fashion ecosystem.

Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization: New Horizons in the Design Process

Artificial intelligence applications in the fashion industry are not only accelerating design processes but also enabling more accurate, data-driven decision-making. From trend forecasting and fabric selection to consumer behavior analysis and personalized product development, AI plays an increasingly active role.

By continuously adapting its curriculum to technological developments, IMA prepares students for the evolving demands of the fashion industry. The integration of AI-powered design tools, digital collection creation, and virtual showroom applications enables students to develop practical experience with next-generation technologies early in their academic journey. In this way, designers evolve beyond mere creators to become professionals who also anticipate and optimize.

Türkiye's strong production capacity in textiles and apparel has long provided a competitive advantage in global markets.



Value-Added Production: A Strategic Transformation for Türkiye

Türkiye's strong production capacity in textiles and apparel has long provided a competitive advantage in global markets. However, today's competition is defined not only by manufacturing strength, but by innovation and brand value.

Value-added production emerges from the convergence of original design, high quality, sustainability, and technological integration. IMA strengthens the educational dimension of this transformation, helping shape the industry. Students not only learn production processes, but also gain insight into how to position their prod-





ucts, build brands, and create differentiation in global markets.

In Close Dialogue with the Industry: Collaboration and Applied Experience

A key differentiator of IMA is its strong and active connection with industry. By partnering with fashion brands, technology firms, and creative-sector organizations, the academy enables students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings and gain practical professional experience. Workshops, panels, and special talk series bring leading industry figures together with students. These platforms are invaluable not only for knowledge exchange, but also for inspiration and the

sharing of vision. Particularly with the growing emphasis on technology- and innovation-driven content, these engagements enable students to closely follow current developments and experience industry transformation firsthand.

The Fashion Professionals of the Future: Multidisciplinary and Multifaceted

The competencies expected from today's fashion professionals are no longer confined to a single discipline. Alongside design expertise, technological literacy, data

IMA offers not only design-focused training but a learning ecosystem enriched by technology. Türkiye's goals for value-added production within the fashion industry.

analysis skills, and sustainability awareness have become equally critical. IMA's educational model supports this multidimensional structure, preparing students for the future. Graduates enter the industry as professionals who think creatively, utilize technology effectively, analyze global trends, and develop innovation-driven solutions. The development of this new generation of talent is critical to achieving Türkiye's long-term objectives of increasing value-added production, strengthening global competitiveness, and enhancing the international positioning of its fashion industry.

Education at the Core of Transformation

The transformation of the Turkish fashion industry through technology and innovation is not only a necessity, but also a fundamental condition for securing a sustainable position in global competition. One of the most critical pillars of this transformation is high-quality education. With its innovative programs, strong industry connections, and technology-driven approach, Istanbul Moda Akademisi continues to lead this process. Fashion is no longer solely about design; it is a field redefined at the intersection of data, technology, and strategy. And in this new era, thanks to institutions like IMA, Türkiye is advancing toward becoming not only a manufacturing hub, but a country that shapes the future of fashion.





REDEFINING TEXTILE AND APPAREL THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: THE İHKİB EXPERIENCE

We spoke with Davut Eren Şadoğlu about the vision, initiatives, and strategic objectives of the İHKİB Digital Transformation Center, established with the support of the European Union and Türkiye's Ministry of Industry and Technology under the IPA II – Digital Transformation in Apparel from Design to Production Project.

Could you tell us about the founding purpose of the İHKİB Digital Transformation Center? What kind of transformation are you aiming to create within the industry?

Our center was established within the scope of the IPA II – Digital Transformation in Apparel from Design to Production Project, supported by the European Union and the Ministry of Industry. Our primary objective is to help textile and apparel exporters strengthen their competitive advantage in global markets through lean transformation, digitalization, and social compliance initiatives. Our activities focus mainly on digital transformation and social compliance. We also provide photography and content production services through our in-house

studio facilities.

The digital transformation journey begins with a Digital Maturity Assessment, where companies are analyzed across 16 different dimensions to identify operational needs and transformation priorities. Our lean transformation experts then evaluate whether a company requires lean manufacturing restructuring before moving into advanced digitalization processes.

We also provide awareness programs for operators, engineers, and executives in digital transformation, while our social compliance services include beginner, intermediate, and advanced-level training, executive-level programs, and awareness sessions on digital solutions for social compliance. The core objective of these pro-

grams is to help company representatives across all levels build awareness and develop transformation capabilities. Following these training programs, we also guide companies through audit preparation processes by conducting current-state analyses and providing consultancy support focused on improvement areas.

Who can benefit from the center's services? How many companies are currently working with İHKİB DDM?

Textile and apparel companies can benefit from our digital transformation, social compliance, and photography studio services. To date, we have provided services to more than 100 companies across various transformation programs and completed Digital Maturity Assessments for 75 firms. Our awareness training programs continue throughout the year, while our Learn & Transform training and consultancy programs are expanding further.

Could you elaborate on the Center's training programs and explain how they contribute to the digital transformation and skill development of the textile and apparel industry?

Our programs are designed for executives, engineers, specialists, and operators. At the executive level, we provide training in lean manufacturing, digital transformation, and social compliance. Before the training begins, we introduce participants to key concepts such as 5S, SMED,

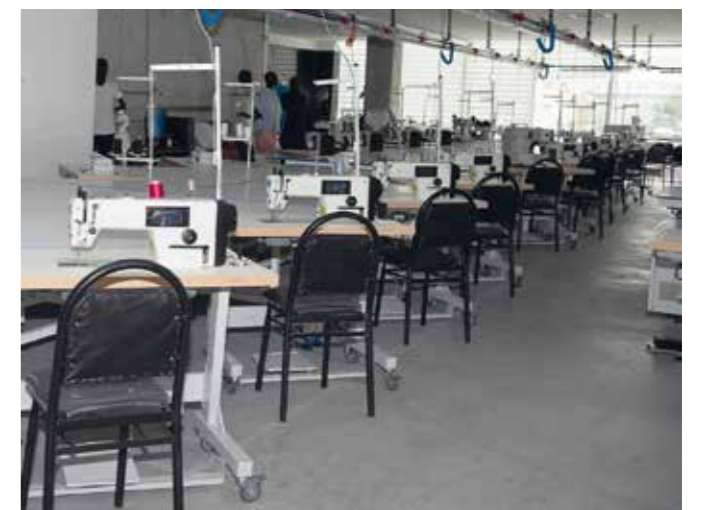
Kaizen, Digital Twin technologies, and RPA (Robotic Process Automation) — concepts that many executives may not yet fully understand or have only encountered superficially. This helps leaders gain a clearer understanding of both the importance of transformation and where to begin. For engineers and specialists, we focus on roadmap development, implementation planning, and staying aligned with emerging industry trends.

Operator-level training is equally important because resistance to change often appears most strongly at this stage. Our short-format programs help reduce that resistance and encourage teams to embrace transformation processes more effectively.



İHKİB Digital Transformation
Center Manager
Davut Eren Şadoğlu

Digital transformation is no longer a choice but a strategic necessity for companies aiming to remain competitive, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure continuous development.





We have already worked with more than 100 companies and completed Digital Maturity Assessments for 75 firms.

What kinds of services does the photography studio provide?

Our photography studio supports companies working in e-commerce, virtual trade fairs, and digital product archiving. The studio includes three different StyleShoots systems — StyleShoots Live, StyleShoots Horizontal, and StyleShoots Eclipse — as well as an infinity background shooting area designed to support professional visual production for the sector.

What role do the “Learn & Transform” programs play within the center?

Our Learn & Transform programs focus on both lean and digital transformation. The programs are built around two core stages. The first is hands-on shopfloor training, where

participants are introduced to transformation tools theoretically before testing and experiencing them within our model factory environment. The second stage is the guidance process. After companies train their internal transformation teams, we expect the same improvement activities implemented in our model factory to be applied within their own production facilities. During this process, our experts continue to provide operational guidance and consultancy support until the transformation is successfully completed.

How would you evaluate the overall digital transformation readiness of Türkiye’s textile and apparel industry?

Compared to many other industries, the textile and apparel sector

remains at an early stage of digital transformation because of its highly labor-intensive structure. Based on our factory visits, company meetings, and digital maturity assessments, we observed that many businesses actually require lean transformation before digitalization. If digital systems are implemented before lean transformation, companies simply end up digitizing existing inefficiencies and waste. That is why we often recommend lean transformation first.

At the same time, the sector remains highly motivated and eager to embrace change. Once companies gain a clear understanding of the operational and financial advantages offered by lean manufacturing and digital technologies, their willingness to invest in transformation increases significantly.

FEEL THE QUALITY CONNECT WITH THE SOURCE

The Global Gateway to the Turkish Leather Industry:
turkishleather.com

Discover high-quality **Turkish leather** and trusted suppliers through **TurkishLeather.com**
the international B2B communication platform bringing global buyers together with **Türkiye’s strong manufacturing network.**

TURKISH DESIGNERS CONTINUE TO CAPTURE GLOBAL FASHION WEEK ATTENTION

Turkish fashion designers continue to reinforce their position on the international fashion landscape, leveraging prestigious global runway platforms to showcase their creative vision while highlighting Türkiye's growing influence in luxury fashion, haute couture, and contemporary apparel design.



Erdem Moraloğlu Marks 20 Years at London Fashion Week
Celebrating the 20th anniversary of his label during London Fashion Week, Erdem Moraloğlu unveiled his collection *The Imaginary Conversation*, merging Victorian romanticism with contemporary silhouettes. The collection explored a dialogue between past and present through couture craftsmanship paired unexpectedly with denim.

Drawing on the lives and legacies of women across centuries, Moraloğlu reimagined voluminous silhouettes, sculptural outerwear, exquisitely embroidered fabrics, and couture separates paired with denim, weaving a lyrical narrative that bridged the past and the present with effortless sophistication. Signature floral elements — long associated with the designer's aesthetic vocabulary — remained central throughout the collection.



Another standout presentation at London Fashion Week came from Bora Aksu, whose romantic and delicate aesthetic once again drew critical attention. Inspired by an 18th-century English ghost story, the collection featured dramatic bridal veils, embroidered ivy motifs, pressed florals, porcelain-like lacework,

and doll-inspired silhouettes. Crystal-embellished tailoring, checked wool fabrics, velvet puffer jackets, and military-referenced outerwear created a striking tension between softness and structure, while Bora Aksu's signature pearl and lace detailing remained at the heart of the collection.

Meanwhile, Turkish designer Aslihan Akan attracted strong attention during a runway presentation held at London's iconic OXO Gallery. Representing Türkiye alongside international creatives from Paris, Berlin, and Africa, Akan presented her Bridging Cultures collection under her label "That's It," delivering one of the most talked-about finales of the showcase.

Emerging Turkish Designers Make a Strong Impression in Paris

At Paris Fashion Week, Tayfun Kaba presented his first apparel collection, showcasing refined feminine silhouettes that combined confidence, grace, and modern elegance. The collection featured corsetted dresses, asymmetrical cuts, fluid satin fabrics, and chiffon textures, balancing couture references with modern glamour. Embroidered eveningwear and voluminous skirts stood out on the runway, while singer Zeynep Bastık opened the show, adding to the collection's energetic atmosphere. Another Turkish designer gaining increasing recognition on the Paris runway is Burç Akyol, who began his career during John Galliano's creative leadership eras at Balenciaga and Dior. Akyol's latest collection, presented among the season's highly anticipated Paris showcases, explored themes of identity, belonging, and nocturnal romanticism. Drawing from a personal

At Paris Fashion Week, designer Tayfun Kaba introduced his first apparel collection, spotlighting strong yet elegant feminine silhouettes.

dialogue between East and West, the collection centered emotional memory and individual freedom. Oversized outerwear, strong shoulder constructions, padded silhouettes, natural color palettes, and draped forms defined the collection's sophisticated visual language.

Turkish Leather Takes the Spotlight

Turkish leather craftsmanship also gained international visibility this season. Emre Erdemoğlu's No Apologies collection emerged as one of the standout presentations at Moscow Fashion Week. Defined by sharp silhouettes, structured shoulders, and a strong emphasis on leather craftsmanship, the collection projected a bold and confident aesthetic that captured significant attention on the runway. Enhanced with metallic accessories and studded detailing, the designs fused rock'n'roll aesthetics with tailoring precision. A powerful palette of black, red, and cream underscored the collection's bold visual language, enhancing its dramatic impact and unmistakable identity. Erdemoğlu emphasized that his work contributes to positioning Türkiye as a center for contemporary, high-quality fashion production on the global stage. Representing the international vision of one of Türkiye's leading leather houses, 1972 DESA unveiled its Autumn/Winter 2026



collection Shades of Seduction during Milan Fashion Week. Balancing elegance with a modern design language, the collection featured rich tonal contrasts and velvety textures, emphasizing the idea that sophistication lies not in excess but in raw authenticity. According to DESA CEO Burak

Çelet, the brand is proud to represent the quality and design expertise of Turkish leather on the international stage. He noted that the prestige earned at Milan Fashion Week will play a significant role in advancing DESA's global growth objectives and enhancing its international brand presence.

RECYCLING AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE IN TÜRKİYE'S TEXTILE AND APPAREL INDUSTRY

Türkiye is rapidly positioning itself as one of the world's leading circular textile production hubs, transforming textile waste into high value-added fibers, regenerated yarns, and sustainable apparel solutions through advanced recycling technologies and industrial-scale regeneration expertise.



Rising global consumption and changing consumer habits continue to accelerate waste generation worldwide. Every year, humanity produces approximately 2 billion tons of waste, while Türkiye alone generates nearly 32 million tons annually. As environmental pressures intensify, recycling is becoming not only an ecological necessity but also a critical economic opportunity. Recycling enables waste materials to re-enter the economy through

collection, sorting, processing, and regeneration. Beyond reducing raw material dependency, it supports resource conservation, lowers energy consumption, minimizes emissions, and strengthens sustainable manufacturing systems.

Textile and Apparel Lead the Circular Transformation

As one of the industries generating the highest levels of waste globally, textile and apparel have become central to circular econo-

my initiatives.

More than 100 billion garments are sold worldwide each year — a figure that has increased by 60 percent compared to 15 years ago. At every stage, from fiber production to consumption and disposal, the sector places enormous pressure on natural resources and ecosystems.

Through recycling, post-industrial and post-consumer textile waste can be transformed into regenerated fibers, new fabrics, insulation materials, furniture fillings, tech-

nical surfaces, and even advanced industrial products. This significantly reduces the need for virgin raw materials while lowering energy consumption throughout the supply chain. The increasing shift toward sustainable production is also transforming brand strategies. Both manufacturers and consumers are showing growing interest in recycled materials, while global fashion and apparel brands are increasingly integrating recycled fibers into their sourcing commitments.

Mechanical and Chemical Recycling Technologies Expand

Türkiye has developed a strong industrial ecosystem capable of processing textile waste through both mechanical and chemical recycling systems.

Mechanical recycling involves shredding textile waste into fibers that can later be blended with virgin materials to improve strength and performance. Chemical recycling, meanwhile, dissolves textile fibers through advanced solvents, enabling regenerated materials to be extracted and transformed into entirely new fabrics.

Recycled textile fibers are widely used across:

- yarn manufacturing,
- nonwoven surfaces,
- automotive insulation,
- roofing materials,
- wall coverings,
- furniture fillings,
- mattress production,
- and technical textile applications.

For polyester-based waste, the process evolves further. Waste

is granulated into pellets before being melted and polymerized into new polyester fibers suitable for fabric production.

Fast Fashion Intensifies the Pressure

The rise of fast fashion continues to accelerate textile waste generation globally.

Each year, Europe alone discards nearly 4 million tons of textile waste, while the global figure has reached approximately 40 million tons. If all textile and apparel waste worldwide could be collected and recycled effectively, experts estimate the industry could generate an economic value of nearly 250 billion dollars.

In Türkiye, approximately 1.8 million tons of textile products reach their end-of-life annually, with around 600,000 tons ending up as waste. Through textile collection bins, nearly 40,000 tons of garments are collected each year, although only about 10,000 tons are currently recycled.

Industry experts estimate that if Türkiye could establish a fully integrated textile waste collection and recycling system, the sector could generate an additional 2.5 billion dollars in value-added output.

Without transformation, the textile and apparel sector is projected to account for 26 percent of global carbon emissions by 2050. Non-renewable raw material consumption could reach 300 million tons, while microplastic pollution entering oceans may climb to 22 million tons.



For a product that has reached the end of its life cycle to be recycled, it must first be collected, sorted and stored in good condition.



It is known that people produce an average of 2 billion tons of waste per year. In Türkiye, this amount has reached 32 million tons.

Uşak Emerges as Türkiye's Recycling Capital

As recycling investments accelerate across Türkiye, the city of Uşak has become the country's undisputed textile recycling center. The city alone accounts for approximately 72 percent of Türkiye's textile recycling industry. Every year, around 510,000 tons of textile waste are transformed into nearly 484,500 tons of regenerated fiber, generating approximately 720 million dollars in added value. Uşak's recycling ecosystem also prevents the consumption of approximately 4.8 billion cubic meters of water annually. In addition to textile waste, nearly 35 percent of Türkiye's PET waste is processed in the city. According to Selim Kandemir, Uşak has developed a unique industrial ecosystem with more than 200 recycling companies operating within the sector. Türkiye currently holds an 18.6 percent share of

global cotton fiber regeneration exports, generating 70.6 million dollars in export revenue.

"Türkiye Recycles 72 Percent of Textile Waste Through Uşak"

According to Eren Öner, Türkiye possesses a significant competitive advantage through its naturally formed recycling clusters. "Uşak alone recycles 72 percent of Türkiye's textile waste. Approximately 978 thousand tons of raw material are recycled annually, transforming waste that would otherwise pollute the environment for thousands of years back into the economy." Öner emphasizes that Europe is still attempting to establish recycling clusters through incentive systems, while Türkiye has already developed this ecosystem organically through industrial specialization. He also notes that recycling technologies must continue evolving:

"Mechanical recycling methods reduce fiber length and strength. To improve quality, textile waste must be separated more carefully at the source, while environmentally friendly chemical recycling technologies should be further supported through R&D investments."

"Türkiye is a Pioneer in Regenerated Textile Fibers"

For Zafer Kaplan, Türkiye's greatest advantage lies in its industrial expertise and regeneration know-how. "Türkiye is a leading country in recovering textile waste by producing extremely fine and high-quality regenerated yarns" Kaplan draws attention to the distinction between recycling and regeneration, emphasizing that Türkiye has become highly specialized in transforming pre-consumer industrial textile waste into regenerated fibers and yarns.

GAMA Recycle has developed multiple patented technologies capable of separating blended garments into cotton, polyester, acrylic, elastane, and accessory components — technologies expected to unlock industrial-scale post-consumer textile recycling globally. The company is also developing advanced polyester recycling systems capable of depolymerizing PET into PTA and MEG under low-temperature atmospheric processes, representing a major breakthrough in textile recycling technologies.

Recycling Already Represents 35 Percent of Textile and Apparel Exports

According to Arif Öztan, recycling has already become a strategic component of Türkiye's export economy. "Approximately 35 percent of Türkiye's textile and apparel exports already come from recycled and

regenerated products." Türkiye currently recycles nearly 1 million tons of textile waste annually, producing approximately 800,000 tons of regenerated yarn. Recycled yarns are increasingly being used not only in socks and home textiles, but also across broader apparel manufacturing categories. Öztan also highlights the sector's growing strategic importance amid global raw material and energy crises: "The world is moving toward a more sustainable production model. Countries that invest in recycling today will gain a major competitive advantage tomorrow."

Europe's Circular Transition Creates New Opportunities for Türkiye

Under the European Green Deal framework, the European Union's Sustainable and Circular Textiles Strategy aims to ensure that by

2030 all textile products entering the EU market are durable, recyclable, and largely produced from recycled fibers. Mandatory textile waste separation systems, expanding Re-HUB recycling centers, and increasing fiber-to-fiber recycling capacities are expected to accelerate demand for circular textile production. Thanks to its proximity to European consumption markets, strong regeneration capacity, advanced machinery infrastructure, and accumulated industrial know-how, Türkiye is increasingly positioned as one of the most strategic recycling and circular textile production hubs for the European market. Today, recycling is no longer viewed merely as an environmental responsibility. It is becoming one of the defining pillars of competitiveness, raw material security, and high value-added manufacturing within the global textile and apparel industry.



TÜRKİYE BUILDS GLOBAL TEXTILE BRANDS THROUGH INNOVATION

Sustainable swimwear made from discarded fishing nets, high-performance insulation panels developed from textile waste, and biodegradable materials produced from agricultural by-products... Turkish startups are building a new, sustainable, and competitive production model for the textile industry through innovative technologies.

For decades, the global textile industry was shaped by low-cost manufacturing, fast delivery, and high production capacity. Today, however, the sector is undergoing one of the most significant transformations in its history. The European Green Deal, carbon regulations, increasing pressure for sustainable production, and changing consumer expectations are transforming textiles from a traditional manufacturing field into a strategic industry driven by technology, biomaterials, and innovation. In this new era, Türkiye is preparing to write a new branding story in textiles by combining its strong manufacturing infrastructure with innovation. Startups focusing on sustainable materials, technical textiles, biotechnology-based production models,

and circular economy solutions are transforming not only the sector's manufacturing capabilities but also its value-added potential. The emergence of these next-generation Turkish ventures demonstrates that the future of textiles is no longer defined solely by fabric production, but by the ability to develop technologies, reduce environmental impact, and create sustainable global brands.

Ocean Waste is Becoming a Global Fashion Product

Another striking example of sustainable transformation is MAIRA Swimwear. The brand develops eco-friendly swimwear collections using fabrics produced from recycled fishing nets and nylon waste

Türkiye is preparing to write a new branding story in textiles by combining its strong manufacturing infrastructure with innovation.



Founder and Creative Director
Selin Ölmez

collected from oceans and seas. Founder and Creative Director Selin Ölmez says the environmental impact of the textile industry was the starting point behind the brand's creation. According to her, fashion today is no longer solely about aesthetics, but also about environmental responsibility. "Today, the textile industry is considered the second most polluting industry in the world. MAIRA's production philosophy extends beyond the use of recycled raw materials. The company also:

- uses eco-friendly packaging materials,
- develops long-lasting product designs,
- and offers reversible swimwear collections to reduce overconsumption.

Through this approach, the brand seeks to challenge fast-consumption culture by promoting more durable and sustainable fashion habits. For Ölmez, sustainability is no longer a niche concern but a core expectation of next-generation consumers: "We wanted to become an active part of the solution and help integrate sustainability into everyday life." The company's export ambitions and investments in international brand visibility also demonstrate the growing global potential of Türkiye's sustainable fashion startups.

Agricultural Waste into Next-Generation Materials

One of the most remarkable examples of this transformation



Irmak Çağlayanel,
Co-Founder of BiGGbiodesign

is biotechnology startup BiGGbiodesign. Led by Irmak Çağlayanel, the company develops 100 percent organic biomaterials from



agricultural by-products such as wheat and barley residues. These materials are fully compostable and naturally decompose within approximately 30 days. What began as experimental work in home kitchens has evolved into an R&D-scale biomaterial production workshop in İzmir. To date, the startup has developed more than 300 different biomaterial formulations. Its product range includes:

- single-use food packaging,
- beverage cups,
- service equipment,

- and sustainable paper and cardboard-based raw materials.

Yet BiGGbiodesign’s real distinction lies not only in environmentally friendly production, but also in its ambition to establish a fully circular system where waste is reintegrated into the economy. As Çağlayanel explains: “We aim to reuse our product waste as soil nutrients for the agricultural industry and create a circular model.” The company produces its biomaterials with low energy



Merve Erbaylar,
Co-Founder of Strade

consumption and reduced carbon emissions while developing products aligned with the sustainability standards of the European packaging market. This approach underscores Türkiye’s potential to evolve from a traditional manufacturing hub for textiles and packaging into a leading center for next-generation biomaterial technologies.

Textile Waste is Becoming High-Tech Construction Material

Among the startups drawing attention in Türkiye’s technical

Today, Türkiye’s textile industry is gaining global attention not only for its manufacturing volume, but also for its sustainability-driven innovation capacity.



textiles ecosystem is Strade, which transforms textile waste into high-performance construction materials. Under the leadership of founder Merve Erbaylar, the startup leverages advanced upcycling technologies to convert textile waste into high-performance acoustic and thermal insulation panels. Strade’s panels stand out with:

- high acoustic insulation,
- superior thermal performance,
- natural structures free from chemical binders,
- and low environmental impact.

The company’s technical results are particularly noteworthy:

- thermal conductivity value of 0.015 W/mK,
- sound insulation performance of $R_w=59.9$ dB.

These figures indicate that the products can compete directly with conventional insulation materials. According to Erbaylar, one of the company’s key missions is to challenge the perception that environmentally friendly products are less effective: “We are breaking the perception

that eco-friendly products are weak through our high technical performance.” The company also positions itself as a “Waste R&D Center” focused on solving the industrial “green bottlenecks” emerging through the European Green Deal and carbon regulations.

Türkiye is Building a New Identity in Textiles

Today, Türkiye’s textile industry is gaining global attention not only for its manufacturing volume, but also for its:

- sustainability-driven innovation capacity,
- biomaterial technologies,
- technical textiles,
- circular economy solutions,
- recycling technologies,
- and eco-conscious design approach.

The solutions developed by these next-generation startups are accelerating Türkiye’s transformation from a low-cost manufacturing hub into an innovation center that develops technologies, creates high value-added products, and builds sustainable global brands. As artificial intelligence-supported production models, smart textiles, biotechnological materials, and carbon-neutral manufacturing practices become more widespread in the coming years, Türkiye aims to strengthen its competitive position in textiles not only through manufacturing power, but through the innovative technologies it develops.



SPEED AND SUSTAINABILITY EMERGE AS TURKISH TEXTILE'S NEW COMPETITIVE EDGE

According to a new report by PwC Strategy&, speed, sustainability and technological transformation are redefining value creation across Türkiye's textile industry, reshaping the competitive parameters of a sector navigating profound global shifts.

Published under the title *Adapting to Global Shifts: Strategic Priorities of the Turkish Textile Industry*, the report examines Türkiye's position within the evolving global trade map, analysing how shifts in manufacturing geographies, mounting sustainability pressures and accelerating digital transformation are recalibrating the future of textile production.

Speed Becomes Fashion's New Supply Chain Currency

As global fashion cycles shorten, Türkiye's geographic proximity to European markets is becoming increasingly strategic. The report highlights how retailers seeking to minimise inventory risk are

gravitating toward more agile manufacturing hubs, prioritising resilience and responsiveness over pure cost efficiency. While Asian competitors may require delivery timelines extending up to three months, Türkiye retains the potential to reduce lead times to a 20–30 day window—an advantage increasingly aligned with fashion's demand for speed-to-market.

Yet the report cautions that maintaining this advantage will require tighter cost management. Labour and energy expenses now account for nearly one-third of fabric production costs, with Türkiye's industrial electricity prices remaining above those of lower-cost manufacturing markets

As global fashion cycles shorten, Türkiye's geographic proximity to European markets is becoming increasingly strategic.

such as Egypt, India and Vietnam since the 2022 energy crisis. As a result, operational efficiency, digitalisation and energy productivity are becoming central to competitiveness. Commenting on the findings, PwC Türkiye Partner Tolga Baloğlu noted that labour and energy costs accounting for between 25% and 35% of overall production expenses are directly influencing the sector's competitive positioning. Investments in digital transformation and energy efficiency, he argued, are now critical to preserving long-term resilience and cost balance.

Higher Value Production Moves to the Forefront

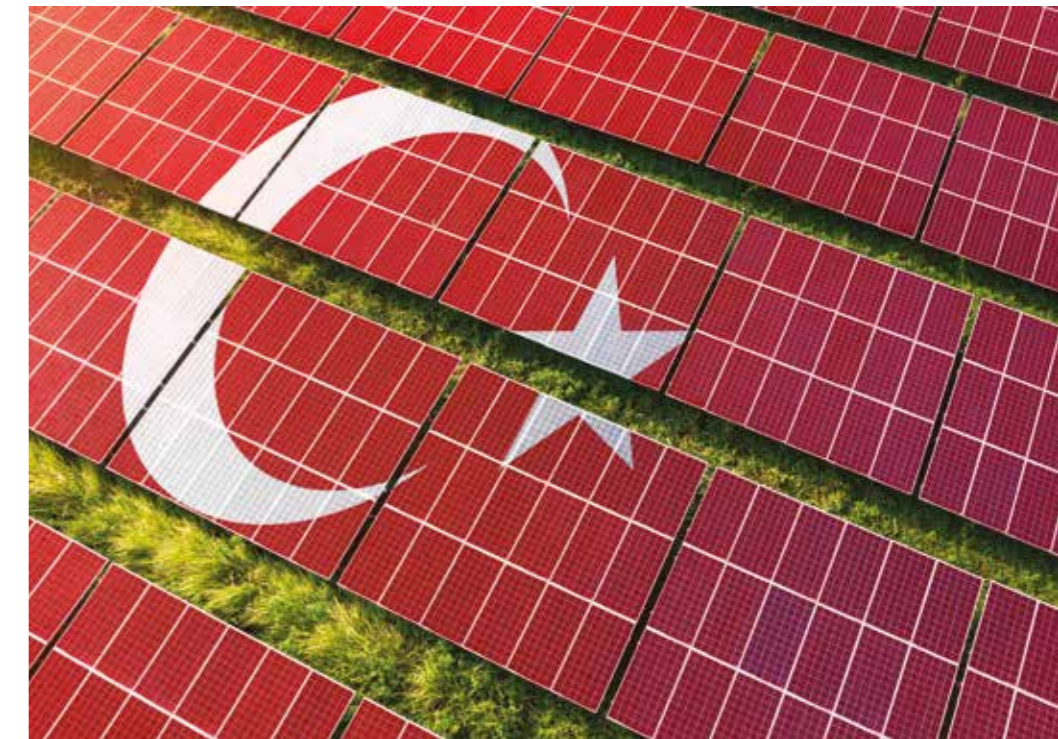
Beyond cost competitiveness, the report positions functional and performance textiles as among the industry's highest-growth categories. The textile industry is undergoing a structural transformation as technical fabrics and performance products deliver substantially higher margins than traditional segments. Digital design tools and modular production systems are enabling manufacturers to thrive amid rapidly evolving fashion cycles. PwC Türkiye Director Can Yapan describes the industry as standing at a pivotal inflection point, where competitiveness is no longer defined solely by production volume, but by how and where production takes place. According to Yapan, companies capable of embedding speed, traceability and sustainability into every stage of

production—particularly those strengthening R&D capabilities in personalisation and functional textiles—will continue shaping the global market beyond 2026.

Sustainability Shifts from Compliance to Market Access

The report further underscores sustainability as an increasingly non-negotiable market requirement. With global brands accelerating net-zero commitments and demand for environmentally

responsible fibres rising, certifications such as GRS (Global Recycled Standard) and GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) are becoming essential for transparency and traceability. Organizations that frame sustainability as a strategic advantage for market retention and growth, rather than simply a regulatory burden, are poised to attract greater financing opportunities and establish more robust long-term partnerships.



Cansu Bodur

Team Leader for Fashion Design Programs at İstanbul Moda Akademisi

Autumn / Winter 2026-27 womenswear macro trends

Cansu Bodur, Team Leader of Fashion Design Programs at İstanbul Moda Akademisi, explores the key womenswear macro trends shaping the Autumn/Winter 2026–2027 season for İTKİB Hedef magazine.

new balance – line of light



© Missoni

This theme turns its gaze toward optimism, creating a sense of emotional and physical comfort through luminous surfaces and lightweight constructions. Blending minimal aesthetics with technology, the narrative offers clarity and functionality while proposing a refined wardrobe



© Khaite

language shaped by noble materials and futuristic sophistication. Spirituality and celestial illumination merge to create a new visual vocabulary. Fragile and ethereal aesthetics inspired by memories and lived experiences intersect with technical fabrics that hybridize timeless classics through a futuristic lens. Movement-driven sports fabrics inspired by the delicacy of ballet merge with layered and airy textures, balancing structure and fluidity across body-tracing technical surfaces. Crystallized neutrals



© Monse

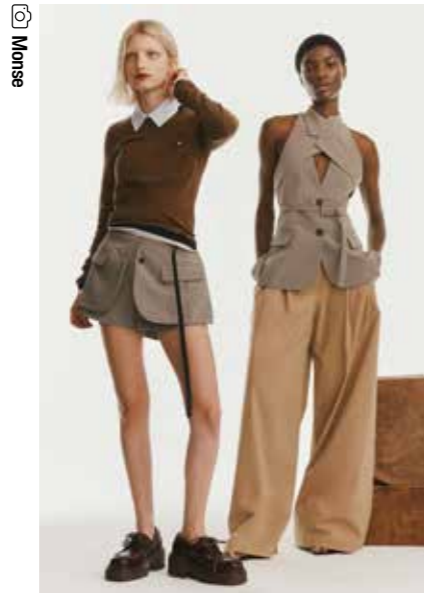
and icy winter shades are paired with high-performance woven fabrics, stretch jerseys, and misted-glass-effect finishes, while metallic accents, glossy effects, and satin surfaces reinforce the theme's sophisticated identity. Designed for transitional dressing, the trend showcases lightweight technical separates, adaptable modular outerwear, and waterproof foldable pieces crafted from recycled synthetics. The aesthetic is reinforced by infrared camera effects, high-energy visuals, and layered distorted graphics that emphasize its streetwear roots.

metropolitan play – urban, yet unexpected

following the ritual – rhythm of the earth



Stella McCartney



Monse



Ganni



Rachel Comey



3.1 Phillip Lim



Armani



Defined by metropolitan references, this theme reimagines familiar wardrobe classics through a playful urban rhythm. Everyday dressing evolves into something extraordinary through daring explorations of color, volume, proportion, and deliberately deconstructed silhouettes. Surprising ca-

sualwear, absurd and playful styling, and modern minimalism coexist within the same fashion narrative. Pop graphics and the joyful spirit of the 1960s refresh classic silhouettes, while formal dressing is revisited through a more elegant, retro-inspired perspective. Creative deconstruction techniques bring artistic and personalized interventions into everyday dressing, redefining contemporary street style. British prep influences from the 1990s return through collegiate references, while primary colors give way to darker shadowed tones, refined greys, and muted beige palettes. Mix-and-match styling creates a sophisticated balance between playful casualwear and classic tailoring, feminine sportswear and

academic aesthetics. Low-waisted voluminous skirts, vintage striped tees, argyle knitwear, and retro A-line silhouettes are paired with technical windbreakers and outerwear, creating wardrobes that merge timelessness with humor and effortless day-to-night versatility.

As individuals search for balance within increasingly volatile global realities, many are reconnecting with ancient rituals and nature-centered values. This theme explores spirituality, mythology, and sacred symbolism through references to forgotten landscapes, nomadic tra-

ditions, and raw natural beauty. Worn-in textures, distressed surfaces, and artisanal craftsmanship dominate the aesthetic, emphasizing reuse, utility, and emotional longevity. Inspired by primitive aesthetics, the theme softens femininity through handcrafted details and natural materials. Rustic artisan surfaces, raw-yet-refined textures, oversized tactile fabrics, dark earthy plaids, aged-effect denim, and weathered leather rein-

force the sense of authenticity and rediscovery. Bouclé knitwear, leather bomber jackets with detachable matte fur trims, low-rise textured trousers, and voluminous rustic skirts emerge as key silhouettes. The color story weaves together warm beiges, bone whites, and charcoal greys with intense blood burgundy, burnt orange, and dark camel—a sophisticated palette that feels both timeless and deeply rooted.

new aristocracy – bohemian grandeur



© Eтро

This theme reinterprets the strong geometric language of the Art Deco era and Renaissance aesthetics through a contemporary lens. Evoking the atmosphere of lavish theatrical settings, the narrative channels the glamour of high society and nightlife as an escape from darker global realities.



© Valentino

Status codes are rewritten through archive-inspired rare pieces presented with eclectic sophistication. Artisanal heritage techniques channel a bohemian spirit, while deep evening hues reimagined for daylight hours capture the essence of contemporary quiet luxury. The palette weaves together purple, navy, petrol blue, and burgundy-brown with shimmering bronze and gold highlights. Contrasts between polished and matte surfaces are softened through tactile



© Lanvin

textures. Geometric jacquards, glittered muslins, and vintage bohemian florals modernize through sharp feminine silhouettes. Oversized coats, dramatic capes, gold metallic detailing, and strong nu-rock-inspired shoulders complete the aesthetic. Elegant evening pyjamas emphasizing luxurious comfort emerge as transitional wardrobe staples, reflecting a lifestyle rooted in timeless sophistication and understated power.

Ayhan Yetgin

Instructor at İstanbul Moda Akademisi



GEO-LOGIC: THE NEW HARMONY BETWEEN NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

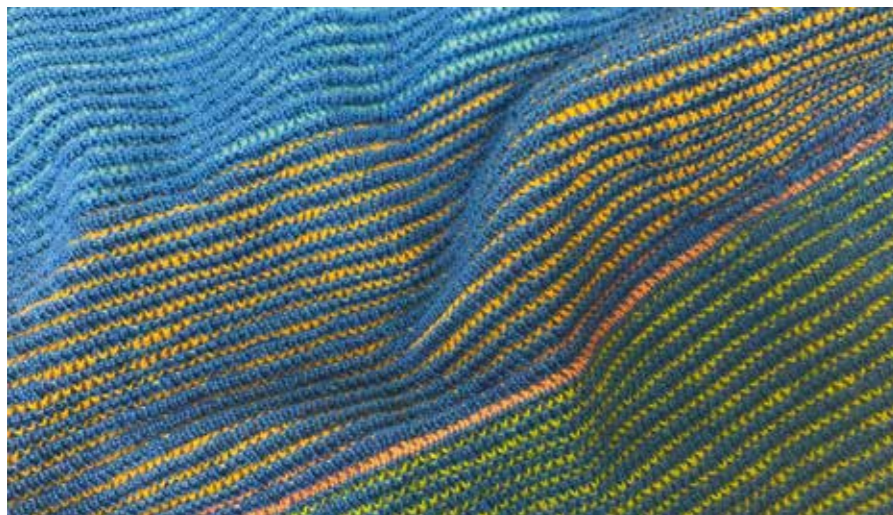
Ayhan Yetgin, educator at Istanbul Fashion Academy, explores the defining knitwear directions shaping the Spring/Summer 2026 season for İTKİB Hedef magazine.

The effects of the climate crisis are no longer confined to scientific reports or environmental debates; they are now embedded in everyday life. Fashion is no exception. The designer's role is being redefined—no longer just aestheticians, they are creative problem-solvers confronting the urgent questions of our time. Within this context,

Geo-Logic emerges not simply as an aesthetic direction, but as a holistic lifestyle vision built around the harmonious coexistence of nature and technology. At its core, Geo-Logic seeks collaboration rather than conflict between nature and technology. Developed in response to climate-related challenges, the narrative encourages designers to

create products that deliver both environmental and social value. Fashion moves beyond surface aesthetics to become a medium that strengthens resilience, adaptability, and emotional optimism.

Inspiration Drawn from Nature, Ritual, and Regeneration
Drawing from indigenous wis-



The design language functions like a bridge, connecting the harshness of nature with human creativity.



dom, natural rhythms, regenerative materials, and bio-based production systems, the trend charts a visionary path for sustainable fashion. Geo-Logic also celebrates the quiet beauty found in nature: the movement of wild grasses, the erosion patterns on stone surfaces, and cosmic reflections emerging through deep violet and midnight-blue skies. Craftsmanship regains significance within this narrative. Knitwear and jersey fabrics are reimagined through surfaces inspired by erosion and oxidation, while undyed yarns and plant-

based dyeing processes reinforce sustainability-driven production values. Fine stitching details become not only decorative elements but also expressions of respect for nature and artisanal labor.

A Dialogue Between Pastoral Calm and Festival Energy

Geo-Logic balances pastoral tranquility with the free-spirited energy of festival culture. On one side, wild meadows and natural landscapes introduce softness and organic authenticity; on the other, batik patterns and psyche-

delic motifs create a futuristic visual language. This duality gives the trend its distinctive strength — simultaneously grounded and energetic, nostalgic and forward-looking. Fashion becomes narrative—a storytelling medium expressed through color. Grounded in earthy terracotta reds, limestone whites, oxidized browns, moss greens, sage, and lavender grays, the palette explodes with festival energy: neon pinks, electric blues, and orange batik effects. Purple sunset gradients and deep cosmic navy complete the vision

with an otherworldly, celestial dimension.

Natural Textures and Layered Styling Take Center Stage

Material integrity drives the Geo-Logic story. Linen, cotton, and raw silk take center stage, transformed through distressed, weathered, and oxidized treatments that embrace imperfection as authenticity. Tie-dye and ombré transitions inject psychedelic energy, while chunky knits, stone-inspired surfaces, and worn denim speak to lasting resilience.

Layering emerges as one of the trend's defining styling approaches. Lightweight natural knits are combined with heavier textured surfaces to create both visual depth and practical functionality. Pastoral knit cardigans and oversized shawls emphasize rural softness, while batik-inspired tops and relaxed silhouettes channel festival-inspired freedom. In more urban interpretations, stone-toned structured outerwear and minimalist accessories reinterpret nature through a contemporary metropolitan lens.

More Than a Seasonal Trend

Geo-Logic represents far more than a seasonal aesthetic direction for Spring/Summer 2026. By bringing together nature and technology, the trend proposes both an emotional and functional response to the climate crisis. Rooted in sustainability, resilience, and harmony, the trend unlocks new dimensions of personal expression. Fashion shifts from wardrobe to worldview—a lifestyle manifesto that speaks to how we choose to live.

Fashion's New Power Struggle: Algorithms or Humanity?

AI X HUMAN

A fundamental tension exists between speed, efficiency, and data-driven production on one hand, and human touch, craftsmanship, and cultural memory on the other. This exploration considers whether AI will continue serving as fashion's digital assistant or transform into an independent authority with the power to direct the industry's strategic decisions.



On one side stands speed, efficiency and data-driven production. On the other: human touch, craftsmanship and cultural memory. Artificial intelligence isn't simply making fashion faster; it's revolutionizing aesthetics, redefining creativity, and transforming how consumers engage with the industry. The pivotal question we now face: will AI remain a supportive digital assistant, or will it evolve into a commanding authority that independently shapes fashion's most critical decisions.

For decades, fashion has operated within a system driven by speed, trends and consumption. But the industry is now entering a far deeper rupture. Artificial intelligence is no longer transforming only production processes; it is redefining aesthetics, creativity and even the meaning of originality itself. The question is no longer what technology can do — but how much of its creative territory humanity can preserve. Technology once transformed only manufacturing floors. Today, it has entered fashion's aesthetic

decision-making process itself. The colours expected to trend, the silhouettes likely to go viral and the fabrics predicted to sell are no longer shaped solely by human intuition. Algorithms are now participating in the conversation. The global fashion industry may be approaching one of the most defining turning points in its history. Because AI is no longer merely a tool; it is becoming an invisible system reshaping every layer of the industry — from design and merchandising to customer experience and consumer



Lack of regulation and its potential exploitation by malicious actors can turn AI technology into a monster.

behaviour. On one side stands the realm of speed, efficiency, and algorithmic, data-driven production. On the other: human touch, craftsmanship and cultural memory. And that is precisely why fashion's biggest question today is this: Will AI remain fashion's digital assistant — or become the industry's new aesthetic authority?

Algorithms Are No Longer Just Analysing Fashion — They Are Creating It

Generative AI systems are no longer limited to processing information. They can now generate collection proposals, create prints, suggest colour

palettes and even conceptualise digital runway presentations. By analysing billions of data points gathered from TikTok trends and Instagram engagement, these systems can often interpret consumer behaviour faster than human teams. For companies operating at the intersection of fashion and technology, this transformation is no longer a prediction about the future. It is already reshaping the present. Mehmet Ali Peker says AI is no longer transforming only operational systems, but the architecture of design itself. According to Peker, fashion is evolving from an intuition-led industry into a massive behavioural economy

powered by data. T-Fashion's AI-supported systems analyse millions of social media interactions to generate predictive trend reports, allowing designers to access not only fashion-week insights but also the rapidly shifting language of digital culture. For Peker, AI-enhanced metaverse and virtual reality platforms represent the future of fashion retail. He anticipates a near future where consumers virtually try on garments using their personal body data—never touching the physical product. The benefits are clear: higher customer satisfaction, fewer returns. But Peker is quick to draw a line. AI may solve technical challenges, but cultural meaning remains beyond its reach. "Think about placing a traditional kilim motif on a modern jacket," he offers. "AI can show you the technical steps—but the story, the cultural memory that motif carries? That's still ours." This is why a new phrase is beginning to circulate throughout the industry: "Algorithmic Fashion." An emerging system in which aesthetic decisions are increasingly shaped by predictive intelligence.

Will Everyone Become a Fashion Designer?

AI-powered platforms are already beginning to democratise fashion design. Applications such as CALA allow users to generate designs through text prompts alone, without requiring tech-

The fashion community grapples with dual anxieties: debates over how extensively designers should employ AI and whether it dilutes originality, alongside deeper fears that AI could "steal" and replicate their creative work.

nical sketching or 3D modelling skills. Users can define silhouettes, fabrics, zippers, logos or cuts and receive multiple design alternatives within seconds. More importantly, these systems increasingly integrate design, production, logistics, e-commerce and brand management into a single digital infrastructure. This evolution is triggering a new debate within fashion: Can anyone become a designer? Industry voices argue that technical capability alone will no longer define creative value. Instead, originality, cultural perspective and conceptual thinking will become even more important.

Why Is Fashion Beginning to Look the Same?

AI's most controversial paradox may be that while it democratizes creativity, it also risks standardising it. Because these systems learn from historical data. They study the most engaged visuals, the best-selling products and the most repeated aesthetics. As a result, algorithms naturally gravitate toward what already performs well. The consequence is an escalating crisis of aesthetic sameness. Across social feeds today, increasingly similar silhouettes, colour palettes, compositions and "AI-generated aesthetics" are becoming impossible to ignore. Mustafa Mertcan believes this poses a serious challenge for creative industries.

According to Mertcan, AI systems can produce trend-compatible outputs based on existing data, but this may also accelerate the rise of collections lacking originality and emotional depth. "Fashion's defining breakthroughs were rarely born from data alone. They emerged from intuition, emotion and cultural instinct," he says, arguing that human aesthetics remain irreplaceable. Because fashion's greatest strength has never been simply looking beautiful. It has always been about storytelling.

And storytelling still remains profoundly human.

The Era of AI Fashion Weeks Has Already Begun

Artificial intelligence is no longer confined to the design studio. It is beginning to reshape fashion's spectacle economy as well. Maison Meta's AI Fashion Week in New York became one of the clearest examples of this transformation. Digital runways displayed AI-generated shows unfolding not only in traditional catwalk environments but also across deserts, rainforests and entirely virtual

AI, which the IMF believes will worsen overall inequality, will affect 26% of jobs in low-income countries.





The future of fashion looks far more compelling with the rise of artificial intelligence.



The management of highly qualified human capital will become increasingly critical.

landscapes. Fashion designer Özlem Süer believes AI will revolutionise customer experience and retail environments in particular. According to Süer, personalised recommendations, intelligent styling systems and virtual fitting technologies are already reshaping fashion consumption. “The future of fashion looks far more compelling with the rise of artificial intelligence,” she says. Virtual fitting technologies allow customers to try garments on through accurate digital representations of their bodies, reducing sizing mistakes while lowering return rates across e-commerce platforms.

Fashion Risks Losing More Than Jobs — It Risks Losing Cultural Memory

The AI debate is often framed around productivity and employment. Yet within fashion, a deeper concern is emerging: the erosion of cultural memory itself. As automation expands across sectors such as carpet weaving, artisanal production and traditional craftsmanship, many fear that centuries of accumulated

knowledge could gradually become invisible. Nihat Yıldız argues that uncontrolled AI integration could weaken cultural diversity within design. According to Yıldız, carpets are not merely decorative products; they are cultural narratives carrying the memory of a geography. “If technology is used solely for mass production and cost efficiency, traditional motifs and artisanal knowledge may inevitably disappear,” he warns. This growing anxiety is also fuelling the rise of “human-made luxury” across the global luxury sector. Because the more digitised fashion becomes, the more valuable human craftsmanship appears. Many trend forecasters now believe that one of the greatest luxuries of the future may simply be something genuinely made by human hands.

The Boundaries of Design Are Disappearing

According to Ufuk Tarhan, artificial intelligence is poised to transform every aspect of the fashion industry, from production

to consumption. According to Tarhan, fashion is entering one of the most radical innovation eras in its history, driven by AR, VR, XR, metaverse ecosystems, wearable technologies and intelligent textiles. “We are entering a period where all creative boundaries and limitations are disappearing,” he says, noting that processes that once took weeks can now be completed within seconds. Tarhan also predicts that tomorrow’s fashion stores will look radically different from today’s, shaped by:

- intelligent mirrors,
- holographic runway presentations,
- robotic sales assistants,
- and augmented reality interfaces.

Yet this transformation will also trigger a new workforce challenge. “The management of highly qualified human capital will become increasingly critical,” Tarhan says, arguing that the industry now requires hybrid talent capable of understanding both creativity and technology.

The Next Generation of Designers No Longer Just Sketches

Fashion’s transformation is not only changing production systems. It is also redefining the identity of the designer. Tomorrow’s creatives are no longer expected only to sketch beautifully. They are increasingly required to:

- interpret data,
- direct AI systems,
- understand digital culture,
- analyse social media aesthetics,
- and navigate hybrid creative ecosystems.

Belma Özdemir says younger generations no longer perceive technology as a threat, but as a natural extension of the creative process.

According to Özdemir, AI is becoming:

- a source of inspiration,
- a visualisation tool,
- a creative accelerator,
- and even a collaborative partner.

Yet she emphasises one critical principle: preserving human agency within creativity. “The real challenge is not replac-

ing human touch with AI, but positioning AI as a tool that complements it,” she says. Because fashion is never just about producing garments. It is about producing emotion, memory and identity. And those territories have not yet been fully surrendered to algorithms.

AI May Increase Efficiency — but Also Deepen Inequality

According to analyses by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), AI technologies are expected to impact nearly 40 percent of jobs worldwide.

The effects could become even more severe across lower-income economies that lack the infrastructure and highly skilled workforce necessary to fully benefit from AI transformation. For labour-intensive industries such as fashion, this shift becomes particularly critical.

On one side lies unprecedented efficiency. On the other, the risk of displaced workforces unable to transition. Which is why the industry is no longer asking only:

“Should we use AI?” But increasingly: “How do we protect human value within an AI-driven future?”

Fashion’s Future Will Not Belong to Technology Alone — but to Balance

Artificial intelligence is no longer operating at the edges of fashion. It now sits at the very centre of the industry. From predictive merchandising and production planning to retail experiences and personalised commerce, every layer is being rewritten. Yet despite the acceleration of technology, industry voices continue to converge around one idea: No matter how advanced AI becomes, the soul of fashion still belongs to humans. Algorithms can optimise. They can accelerate. They can predict. Still, cultural instinct, aesthetic courage, and emotional disruption belong to the human mind alone. Perhaps tomorrow’s most valuable designs won’t be those crafted by flawless algorithms—but those where human presence.

THE GLOBAL CARPET TRADE CONVERGED IN İSTANBUL AT ICFE 2026



Organized in collaboration with the Istanbul Carpet Exporters' Association (İHİB) and the Southeastern Anatolia Carpet Exporters' Association (GAHİB), and hosted by TÜYAP, the ICFE 2026 International Carpet and Flooring Expo took place from January 6–9, 2026.

Bringing together leading carpet manufacturers from Türkiye and around the world, ICFE 2026 once again proved to be one of the most significant global meeting points for the industry. Held for the third time and spanning 11 halls, the fair welcomed 500 companies from 21 countries, including 150 international exhibitors—underscoring its strong global profile. ICFE 2026 aims to create a dynamic platform for manufac-

turers and buyers in the carpet and flooring sector, fostering new partnerships and commercial opportunities. Speaking at the opening, Minister of Trade Ömer Bolat stated: "Türkiye ranks among the leading countries globally. We rank second in carpet production and exports. Many of our cities are renowned for their exceptional carpets—such as İsparta, Hereke, Bünyan (Kayseri), and Demirci (Manisa), with Gaziantep standing out as a true star city, recognized

The third edition of ICFE, held across 11 halls, brought together 500 companies from 21 countries. ICFE 2026 aims to unite manufacturers and buyers in the carpet and flooring industry, fostering new collaborations and commercial opportunities.



A range of exhibitions highlighted the industry's creative strength.



worldwide for its exports." At the gala dinner held within the scope of the fair, Former İHİB Chairman Ahmet Hayri Diler highlighted the rapid success of ICFE: "In a very short time, we have achieved remarkable success. Having surpassed expectations from its very first editions, ICFE has grown into one of the world's premier carpet fairs. Today, the global carpet industry looks to Türkiye as a central hub, where international trade, innovation, and

market opportunities converge." Emphasizing Türkiye's role beyond production, Diler added: "We are not only manufacturing—we are shaping global trends and bringing vision to the industry. Türkiye is a true carpet country, and it has proven its strength to the world."

Strengthening International Participation

Highlighting the fair's continued growth, Diler stated that: "This year, we hosted 500

companies from 21 countries across 11 halls. The fact that 150 of our exhibitors are international clearly demonstrates that ICFE has become a global hub of attraction." He also underlined the collaborative effort behind the event's success: "This achievement is the product of determination, expertise, and sustained investment. It has been made possible by our companies, which continue to compete successfully through high-quality

500

companies
(150 international)

ity, value-added production. Their strength not only drives our industry forward but also reinforces Türkiye's position on the global stage."

Where Commerce Meets Design and Art

ICFE 2026 once again hosted the "World's Most Unique Carpet" project, bringing together the creativity of 400 designers. Combining 400 individual stories, visions, and talents, this collective work showcased the intersection of traditional carpet craftsmanship and contemporary design—highlighting the sector's creative potential. Such initiatives aim to position the fair beyond a commercial platform, transforming it into a living design laboratory. Following last year's strong reception, the "MyOwnPiece" workshop returned to the program, inviting designers from Türkiye and across the globe to interpret a shared theme through their own creative expressions.



In addition, a range of exhibitions highlighted the industry's creative strength. The fair also featured a design competition for exhibitors, providing a platform to showcase the latest collections. Finalist entries were exhibited throughout the venue, attracting significant interest from visitors and industry professionals. Special exhibitions interpreting traditional motifs through a contemporary lens, alongside a rich program of professional events, further elevated the fair experience.

Inspiring Content and Thought Leadership

The Carpet Talks program offered a comprehensive series of sessions structured around four key themes shaping the future of carpet design. Discussions explored evolving design methodologies, diverse creative approaches, and the intersection of traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics. The role of design in branding processes was also examined, alongside broader sectoral trends. The exhibition paid spe-

By blending contemporary interpretations of traditional motifs with a comprehensive programme of professional events, the fair offered a multidimensional experience that celebrated both cultural heritage and industry innovation.



cial tribute to Hereke silk carpets, emphasizing their distinguished heritage, remarkable technical artistry, and continued relevance as symbols of cultural and design excellence in the modern era. On the opening day, Şeyda Elif Çakmak presented "Building the Carpet Brand of the Future: From Tradition to Digital," while Prof. Dr. Nazan Avcioğlu Kelebek and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Esin Sarıoğlu delivered a session titled "Past, Present, and Future of Carpet Design Education." On the second day of the event,

a panel moderated by Özgür Uşaklıgil brought together Enes Karadayı and Adem Karadayı to discuss "Communication and Opportunities in the Carpet Industry." Another session, "TÜYAP Career Route: Careers Weaving the Future," moderated by Arzu Saraç, featured Prof. Dr. Nuran Kara Pilehvarian, Selim Şentürk, and Nilay Susulu. Reyhan Polat presented "Design Excellence and Composition in Hereke Silk Carpets," while Mustafa Avcı addressed "The Evolution of R&D in the Carpet

Industry." On the final day, Hakan Uçar spoke on "Shaping the Future of Circularity in the Carpet Sector," and Prof. Dr. Sevim Arslan presented "From Tradition to Modernity: The Timeless Aesthetic of Craft and Design." The Carpet Design Horizons panel, moderated by Özgür Uşaklıgil, featured project presentations by Fatemeh Babaeinia, Sümeyye Çetin, Ahmet Acar, and Betül Çetin. Erhan Ör concluded with "Hereke Carpets: A Masterpiece of Timeless Craftsmanship."

DESIGN TAKES THE LEAD IN TÜRKİYE'S CARPET INDUSTRY

As the industry evolves, Türkiye's carpet sector is increasingly building its future on value rather than volume, leveraging design innovation, creative excellence, and cultural depth as key drivers of sustainable growth and global competitiveness.





Each presenting original interpretations of Türkiye's rich textile heritage through a contemporary design lens.



Alongside the top three finalists of the 18th National Carpet Design Competition, 40 companies were recognized across four award categories for their significant contributions to the carpet industry's export performance, expected to total USD 2.8 billion in 2025.



Organized by the Istanbul Carpet Exporters' Association (İHİB), the 18th National Carpet Design Competition once again brought emerging designers to the forefront, highlighting the sector's strategic shift toward high value-added production. Taking place on February 11, 2026, the event underscored the increasing importance of design in strengthening Türkiye's position in the global marketplace.

A Platform for Creative Vision

The competition showcased the

work of eight finalists, each presenting original interpretations of Türkiye's rich textile heritage through a contemporary design lens. By creating a meaningful dialogue between heritage and innovation, the event positioned design at the heart of the industry's transformation, reinforcing its role as a catalyst for creativity, value creation, and global competitiveness. The winners of this year's competition were:

First Prize: Pirdoğan Burhanlı – Flow

Second Prize: Cihan Gözel – Collision

Third Prize: Hazal Deniz Bozkurt – Legacy

The top three designers were awarded monetary prizes of TRY 150,000, TRY 120,000, and TRY 90,000 respectively.

Design as a Value Multiplier
Ahmet Hayri Diler, Chairman of İHİB, stressed that the industry's future competitiveness will be driven not by scale alone, but by its ability to generate originality, foster innovation, and deliver high-value products and services:

"Producing alone is no longer enough. We must differenti-

ate through high value-added, design-driven products. Design does not simply make a product more attractive—it gives it identity, narrative, and value. Design is the language of the future, and those who speak it best will lead the way."

From Heritage to High Value

Mustafa Gültepe, Chairman of the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), highlighted the importance of combining Türkiye's deep-rooted heritage with contemporary design thinking: "Our centuries-old heritage of

craftsmanship must be integrated with the creativity and energy of modern design. While we already rank among the world's leaders in production quality, our future success will depend on transforming this strength into greater value through innovation, originality, and design excellence."

A Sector Moving Up the Value Chain

As the world's second-largest carpet exporter, Türkiye holds an almost 17% share of global carpet trade, reflecting its significant

influence within the international industry. The sector is now undergoing a strategic evolution—shifting from cost-driven competition to a model built on design, branding, and innovation.

The National Carpet Design Competition plays a critical role in this transformation by attracting young creative talent and embedding design thinking at the core of the industry. Far more than a competition, it serves as a visionary platform shaping the future of Turkish carpets by bringing together traditional craftsmanship and high-value design.



Katerina Cansu Ertem Paoletti & Alev Ertem
Founders of Studio Potato



“CREATING AESTHETIC AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS WHILE PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE”

Committed to preserving the rich heritage of weaving traditions, Katerina Cansu Ertem Paoletti and Alev Ertem united their creative vision and entrepreneurial expertise to create Studio Potato, a brand rooted in craftsmanship, culture, and contemporary design. Through contemporary interpretations of traditional techniques, the brand builds a sustainable model rooted in long-term collaborations with women weavers

How did the idea for Studio Potato emerge? What do you do at Studio Potato?

A.E.: Studio Potato was born out of a desire to create bold and distinctive designs at a time when we realized that the craft of weaving had been rapidly fading into invisibility over the past 20–30 years. We noticed that handwoven products tended to be perceived either as nostalgic artifacts or as exclusive items available only to a niche audience. We believed there was a strong space between these two extremes—one that could bring craft and contemporary design

together. Our motivation was to rethink kilims and rugs not as relics of the past, but as living design elements that can exist within today's interiors.

C.E.: At Studio Potato, we create home décor collections ranging from kilims and cushions to coasters, translating Anatolia's rich weaving heritage into a contemporary design language. Each piece is produced through handcraft-driven processes in collaboration with women weavers across various regions of Türkiye, ensuring the continuity of traditional craftsmanship while embracing modern aesthetics.



We prioritize natural or recycled materials. We strive to create timeless products that combine aesthetics, sustainability, and functionality, ensuring that cultural heritage remains relevant and meaningful within contemporary lifestyles.

As young entrepreneurs continuing this cultural heritage through traditional methods and contemporary design, what has been your biggest challenge?

C.E.: The greatest challenge has been making a labor-intensive and inherently slow production model sustainable within today's economic conditions. Handweaving requires time, patience, and significant effort, yet market conditions often fail

to fully compensate this labor. Balancing the protection of artisans' work with making design products accessible requires a very delicate equilibrium. **A.E.:** Beyond the operational challenges, gaining access to finance, building credibility, and developing the right professional networks were among the key hurdles we faced as young women entrepreneurs. Moreover, bringing a new design perspective to a deeply traditional sector required a sustained effort to win the confidence of both producers and consumers.

Could you tell us about your production processes? Where and by whom are Studio Potato products made?

C.E.: Studio Potato products are produced by women weavers across different regions of Türkiye. We collaborate with cooperatives and workshops in İzmir, Uşak, Manisa, and the Black Sea region. To date, our work has indirectly supported the livelihoods of more than 50 women. We actively engage with the production process, working closely with weavers and implementing comprehensive quality control measures to ensure the highest standards throughout production. We firmly believe that preserving the tradition of handweaving depends on strong, trust-based relationships. Consequently, we focus on fostering long-term partnerships rather than pur-

Paoletti: Our design approach is rooted in taking traditional weaving techniques as a reference point and reinterpreting them through a modern lens.

ture, daily life, personal memories, and the urban environments that surround us. Every piece tells its own story and is designed to foster a lasting emotional connection with its audience. In a way, just as traditional weavers expressed their stories through motifs like *eli belinde* or *ram's horn*, we, too, weave our own narratives into our designs.

How would you define the historical and cultural significance of handweaving and traditional rug-making in Türkiye?

A.E.: Rugs and kilims are among the most powerful cultural storytelling tools of Anatolia. For centuries, this craft—passed down by women—has also functioned as a form of communication. Despite its rich heritage, handweaving production has faced a substantial decline in recent years due to the combined impact of industrial mechanization, economic constraints, and shifting consumer behaviours. These factors have led weavers to favor familiar, easier designs over innovation, limiting both the emergence of new designs and the entry of new artisans into the field. Unfortunately, this creates a cycle that hinders both innovation and financial sustainability within the sector. While a wealth of expertise and traditional knowledge remains within the sector, its long-term survival depends on economic sustainability. We are convinced

that, when supported by thoughtful design and innovative business models, this field can once again thrive and create lasting value.

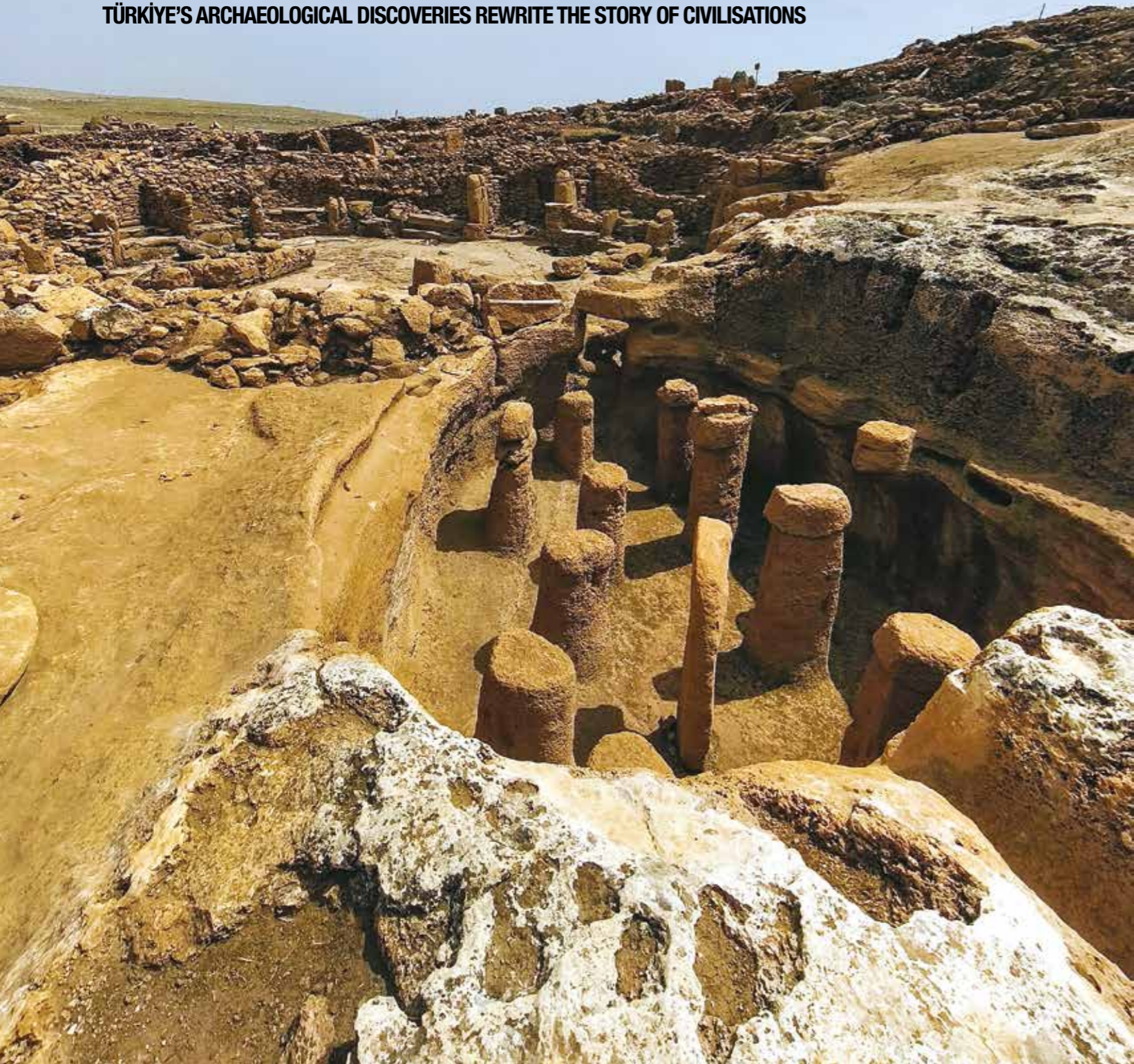
How is the consumer response to your handwoven products? Through which channels do you reach your audience? What about your export strength and short-term goals?

A.E.: Our products are available through our website, our physical store POTKA in Kadıköy, selected retail partners, and design-focused online marketplaces. Interest in our handwoven products is steadily increasing in both local and international markets. In addition to B2C sales, we also operate in a B2B model, collaborating with interior design studios, hotels, and corporate projects. Europe and the United States remain strategic priority markets for our international growth. Participation in leading events such as Milan Design Week enables us to engage with global design discourse, monitor emerging trends, and establish meaningful connections with industry professionals worldwide. Looking ahead, our primary focus is to accelerate international B2B growth and enhance Studio Potato's recognition as a contemporary brand that seamlessly combines sustainability, craftsmanship, and design innovation. We are committed to strengthening our presence in global markets while remaining true to our cultural and artisanal roots.

NOTES TO WORLD HISTORY FROM THE LANDS OF

Anatolia

TÜRKİYE'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES REWRITE THE STORY OF CIVILISATIONS



From Neolithic ritual sites and Bronze Age treasures to Roman sculptures and Ottoman shipwrecks, Türkiye's "Legacy for the Future" initiative turned 2025 into a landmark year for archaeology—bringing extraordinary discoveries from the depths of Anatolia into the global spotlight.

► Gizem Iris

The mystery of Anatolia—one of the world's oldest cradles of civilisation—continues to unfold.

Across lands layered with the traces of countless empires, kingdoms and belief systems, each excavation season reveals another remarkable chapter of human history. In this sense, 2025 marked one of the most prolific years in recent memory. From crocodile and flamingo mosaics unearthed in a Roman bath complex in Milas to a 4,500-year-old gold-ringed brooch discovered in Troy, the year delivered a remarkable series of findings that stretched across millennia. Conducted under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Legacy for the Future initiative, archaeological excavations expanded into a year-round scientific effort designed to protect, uncover and increase the visibility of Türkiye's cultural heritage.

The ten most significant discoveries of 2025 were publicly unveiled by Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, who described the year as one of extraordinary cultural productivity spanning east to west across the country.

"In 2025, we did more than work across culture, arts and tourism—we created lasting traces," Ersoy stated. "From museums to excavation sites, we adopted an approach focused on preserving cultural heritage, making it visible and connecting it with society. Through the Legacy for the Future initiative, we opened



At Karahantepe, archaeologists uncovered a monumental public structure measuring nearly 17 metres in diameter, alongside enigmatic small human figures with ring-like forms surrounding their heads.

the doors to a new era in archaeology."

From the "Zero Point of History" to the Bronze Age

In Şanlıurfa, the groundbreaking Taş Tepeler project—already known for reshaping humanity's understanding of prehistory—continued to reveal extraordinary findings in 2025. At Karahantepe, archaeologists uncovered a monumental public structure measuring nearly 17 metres in diameter, alongside

enigmatic small human figures with ring-like forms surrounding their heads. Researchers believe these discoveries could shed new light on the Neolithic period, one of humanity's earliest and least understood chapters. Equally significant were T-shaped standing stones depicting stylised human faces dating back 12,000 years, as well as ritual spaces believed to reshape prevailing theories surrounding the origins of belief systems.



At Ephesus, a UNESCO World Heritage site, archaeologists uncovered a terracotta incense burner decorated with a relief of the Egyptian god Serapis.



Nearby, at Sayburç—an archaeological site dated to approximately 8500 BCE—an 11,000-year-old sculpture depicting death rituals offered compelling clues into how early communities understood mortality and the cycle of life. Meanwhile, at Tavşanlı Höyük in Kütahya, one of western Anatolia's largest Bronze Age settlements, archaeologists unearthed a remarkable collection of 4,500-year-old idols crafted from marble, bone and terracotta. Seven human-shaped idols found side by side near a hearth

are believed to offer unique insights into Bronze Age religious rituals, cultural life and economic structures. At Troy, one of the year's most celebrated discoveries emerged in the form of a 4,500-year-old brooch adorned with an exceptionally rare jade stone. Excavated from the legendary ancient city after more than 160 years of archaeological work, experts described the artefact as one of the most important discoveries of the last century. Only three examples are known to exist globally—and the Troy specimen

is believed to be the best preserved.

Sacred Relics of Mythology, from East to West

A further remarkable find emerged from the ancient city of Amastris in Bartın, where archaeologists unearthed an atypical representation of Medusa—one displaying an unexpectedly gentle, nearly smiling expression that defies the traditional fierce iconography. Departing from traditional representations of the feared mythological figure, the artefact quickly

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A luxurious marble bathtub from the first century CE was unearthed by archaeologists excavating the Terrace Houses district at Ephesus.

became one of the year's most discussed findings. The traces of ancient belief systems also surfaced in Muğla and İzmir. At the ancient city of Amos in Muğla, excavations revealed a silver necklace from the Neo-Assyrian period featuring a depiction of the goddess Ishtar, alongside lion motifs and an eight-pointed star—symbols closely associated with the deity. Researchers noted that the discovery further reinforced Amos' historical importance as a centre of cultural, economic and com-

mercial influence. At Ephesus, a UNESCO World Heritage site, archaeologists uncovered a terracotta incense burner decorated with a relief of the Egyptian god Serapis. Found near the city's Harbour Street and Roman bath complex, the artefact carries particular significance due to its proximity to the Temple of Serapis—highlighting the interconnected spiritual world of the ancient Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the ancient city of Kibyra in Burdur delivered a monumental reminder of Roman

imperial power: a marble statue of Emperor Hadrian, standing over two metres tall and clad in military armour, was brought back to light centuries after its burial. In Van, excavations at Kev-enli Fortress uncovered 76 massive storage vessels, known as pithoi, inscribed with cuneiform script and linked to the Urartian Kingdom. Archaeologists believe the discovery offers critical insight into the administrative and economic systems of the region.

Traces of Roman Elites on the Aegean Coast

At Ephesus, archaeologists working in the Terrace Houses district—once home to Roman elites—unearthed a luxurious marble bathtub dating back to the first century CE. Carved from Greco Scritto marble, the object was discovered during restoration efforts clearing vegetation-covered sections of the site and has since entered museum collections. The discovery provides a vivid reminder of the importance of bathing rituals and wellness culture in Roman society. Another remarkable discovery surfaced at Metropolis near İzmir, historically known as the City of the Mother Goddess. Archaeologists uncovered an elegant 2,200-year-old marble goddess head from the Hellenistic period, believed to depict Hestia, the goddess of family and the hearth. Researchers noted that the sculpture reveals the technical sophistication and artistic refinement of Hellenistic craftsmanship.



In mythology, Hermes is recognised as Zeus' swift messenger and the god of trade, roads and prosperity—symbolism clearly reflected in the statue's iconography.

Aspendos: A Mythological Witness of the Mediterranean

In Aspendos—one of the Mediterranean's most enduring archaeological landmarks—figures hidden beneath the earth for centuries returned to daylight. Archaeologists uncovered a marble statue of Hermes dating to the Roman period (2nd–3rd century CE), alongside sculptural fragments representing Aphrodite, Eros, Artemis and Nemesis—some of antiquity's most iconic mythological figures. Standing 1.65 metres tall, Hermes was discovered holding a

money pouch in his right hand and a staff (kerykeion) in his left, accompanied by a ram figure facing the deity. In mythology, Hermes is recognised as Zeus' swift messenger and the god of trade, roads and prosperity—symbolism clearly reflected in the statue's iconography.

The Hidden Stories of Gordion and Hadrianopolis

One of the year's earliest archaeological breakthroughs emerged from Gordion, the capital of the Phrygian Kingdom.



Elsewhere, in Hadrianopolis in Karabük, discoveries pointed to a quieter side of ancient life.

Researchers uncovered a royal tomb that had remained unopened for 2,700 years. Inside lay wooden furniture pieces, bronze vessels, and perhaps the most extraordinary find of all: a fragment of linen fabric that survived millennia, preserved by the chemical corrosion of the surrounding bronze objects. Archaeologists characterized this textile fragment as an exceptional time capsule—one that offers unmediated insight into the weaving techniques and craftsmanship practiced thousands of years ago. Elsewhere, in Hadrianopolis in Karabük, discoveries pointed to a quieter side of ancient life. Bone-made game pieces and dice dating back to the fifth century revealed traces of entertainment culture often overshadowed by narratives of war and empire. Researchers believe the objects may have belonged to strategic games such as Ludus Latrunculi, reportedly played by Roman soldiers during their leisure time.



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