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> " The explosive impact of communications has not only eased people's lives, it has made the country more democratic and pluralistic."
>
> **—Turkish IT leader**

> " Turkey needs a holistic national policy and strategy for the IT sector—both for public IT use as well as for private development and use. Legal frameworks are needed for a productive environment in Turkey, but are missing or lagging behind significantly."
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> **—Consultant, Turkey**

The government of the Republic of Turkey has been moving to integrate the country into Europe since its founding by Mustafa Ataturk in 1923. In line with this long-term national aim, Turkey has been investing aggressively in Networked Readiness in recent years, building bridges between Europe and the East. While diffusion and use of these technologies have been proceeding in Turkey, progress has been hampered by unfavorable economic conditions, the November 2000 banking crisis, and rapidly shifting governments during the past ten years.[1] The nation ranks forty-first in overall Networked Readiness.

The telecommunications sector in Turkey is still dominated by the government monopoly, Turk Telekom (TT), which maintains a large infrastructure but hampers competition and remains slow to adapt (Ranking in Effect of Telecommunications Competition: 52). In May 2001, partly in response to IMF demands and as part of its drive to join the EU, the parliament voted to privatize TT by the end of 2003. In contrast, competition in the mobile telephony and Internet Service Provider (ISP) markets has spurred rapid growth. There are now four competing cellular carriers, and mobile telephone use has jumped from roughly 10 percent of households in 1997 to 50 percent in 2000.[2] There are about thirty ISPs whose subscriber base has increased from 450,000 in 1998 to 1.2 million in 2000[3] (Ranking in Effect of ISP Competition: 26).

However, cost and training remain barriers to Turkey's use of ICTs. One recent survey found that cost is the major obstacle to Internet use in Turkey.[4] Bundling long-term Internet subscription packages with PCs has increased use, but the technology remains too expensive for many.

Banks and financial and brokerage firms have led in use of the Internet for business purposes in Turkey. All of the major banks in Turkey have Web-based applications where customers can carry out transactions online, and use of WAP and telephone services for stock exchange operations is encouraged.

Likewise, several governmental bodies have ICT projects underway. The Ministry of Education has begun deploying computer facilities with broadband connections to 75,000 schools within Turkey—a massive undertaking that many expect will run into funding and infrastructure hurdles. The ministries of Health, Justice, and Revenues are all implementing information systems, and the Ministry of Industry is focusing on improving awareness of e-commerce among small and medium enterprises. As promising as these efforts are, the question of coordination remains; the Prime Minister's National Information System and planned Web portal (http://kamu.net.tr),[5] are charged with integrating government efforts.

In Network Policy, the Turkish government has made clear its dedication to improvement of domestic ICT (Ranking in ICT as Government Priority: 68). Privatization of TT is a critical step. It is a slow process, however, and many have balked at the possibility of foreign corporations gaining a controlling interest. But the direction and spirit of these policies have been unmistakably toward Europe. The eEurope+ initiative and the Turkish National Infrastructure Masterplan have many lofty goals related to Networked Readiness, among them establishing regulatory bodies for telecommunications, encouraging ICT research and development, and creating relevant e-commerce and information policies, while nurturing domestic ICT awareness, training, and industry.

Key Facts

Population	65,700,000
Rural population (% of total population) 1999	25.92 %
GDP per capita (PPP)	US$6,870
Global Competitiveness Index Ranking, 2001–2002	54
UNDP Human Development Index Ranking, 2001 (adjusted to GITR sample)	56
Main telephone lines per 100 inhabitants	27.99
Telephone faults per 100 main telephone lines	55.73
Internet hosts per 10,000 inhabitants	10.64
Personal computers per 100 inhabitants	3.81
Piracy rate	63.00 %
Percent of PCs connected to Internet	2.80 %
Internet users per host	28.60
Internet users per 100 inhabitants	3.04
Cell phone subscribers per 100 inhabitants	24.55
Average monthly cost for 20 hours of Internet access	US$11.20

RANK

Readiness for the Networked World	**41**
Network Use Index	**39**
Network Enabling Factors Index	**44**
Network Access	**45**
Information Infrastructure	33
Hardware, Software, and Support	57
Network Policy	**45**
Business and Economic Environment	41
ICT Policy	48
Networked Society	**45**
Networked Learning	38
ICT Opportunities	35
Social Capital	62
Networked Economy	**44**
e-Commerce	33
e-Government	46
General Infrastructure	52