

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Dear Guests,

Welcome to the 38th International Congress of Asian and North African Studies which has established a tradition since 1873 and which was traditionally named as the Congress of Orientalists until 1973.

Being held in a time of conflict between the ones pursuing peace for humanity and the others aiming chaos, we have established the fundamental message of ICANAS 38 from Atatürk.

Although he lived 17 years of his short life of 57 years as a soldier, Atatürk underlines the importance of peace for him by stating that “If not for independence, war is committing murder.” We commemorate him with gratefulness and compassion. The key idea of our Congress is to recall the significance of peace both at local and global level.

We aim to highlight this idea through Atatürk’s famous dictum: “Peace at home, peace in the world.” Peace, we believe, is not a slogan merely; it is a deliberate way of life and philosophy.

524 people attended to the 22nd Orientalists Congress which was held in Istanbul right after the 2nd World War in 1951 and 95 of the attendees were Turkish. Almost all of the European participants were accompanied by their spouses. Today, we have the abstracts of 230 papers presented in Istanbul during the Congress.

Today, our Congress housing totally 1777 presenters with more than 1590 paper presentations, some of which are prepared by two or more people, and 104 panel discussions is much richer than the previous one. The congress enriched with the thoughts of almost 1800 participants from 62 countries and 9 autonomous regions is expected to contribute to the progression of humanity and science.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to express my respects and gratitude to the members of International Advisory Board, National Organization Committee and Section Chairs of the ICANAS 38, organized by the Atatürk Supreme Council for Culture, Language and History, before our Prime Minister and distinguished guests.

It is natural that, we, Turkish people, are trying to sustain the Turkish Republic as a constitutional state based on democratic and secular ideology. It is disappointing, however, that we have been facing aspersions, baseless accusations, unfair and false implications about our history of the last 100 years, the integrity of Turkish Republic and Atatürk.

Yet, we strongly believe that our friends also share our feelings concerning the deliberately polluted information and disinformation rejected by history and sociology as well, once they get to know Turkey.

We also deeply believe that we will reconcile with everybody who respects our ambition for independence, integrity and development of our nation.

It is a must that all the nations should combine their forces in order to exist together in peace and to get access into a brighter future as respectable and civilized peoples. Removing the barriers against living in peace as civil and independent nations is the responsibility of scholars, administrators, politicians and scientists who should collaborate for the good of humanity.

Dear distinguished native and foreign researchers!

As you know, the primary goal of humanities and social sciences is to serve humanity by enhancing public welfare and peace, adopting scientific methods as well as strengthening

the friendly relations between nations depending on law and science to replace hostility and conflicts. Real scientists, thus, should take a stand against the false accusations about Turkey.

This Meeting is an outcome of our 22-month of intense work. You may find further information on the 38th ICANAS Meeting on our website, which has been visited by almost 35,000 people up to now.

Congress presentations and panels will be held in 18 different halls in Bilkent University Conference Center and TOBB Economy and Technology University. Each participant will be provided with a Congress abstracts book.

We hope that our guests will appreciate the rich content of our scientific and social programs.

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It is the responsibility of any and every sensitive person to honor and exalt those who have reached their 80's while serving their nations and humanity. Unfortunately, it is common to neglect scientists and researchers who worked for promoting their countries whereas those who work in the field of politics and trade are generally remembered due to the more popular nature of these fields. So, it is our duty to commemorate and respect these people and transform this duty to a tradition. It is our honor to present crystal plates and hand-made porcelain plates covered with silver on which their names are written –prepared by Gural Company- to 12 of those intellectuals –the 12 stars of Turkish Science and Art—whose names and work are acknowledged internationally.

Knowledge lasts if only it embraces communities, societies and all humanity, and enhances their physical and psychological wellbeing. There is no such thing as eternity but just remembrance. It is our wish that the 12 stars of Turkish Science and Art, the oldest one is

Şükrü ELÇİN (95) and the youngest one is Kemal BAYTAŞ (80), will always be remembered in future through the reflections of their works, experiences and teachings.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Dear Ministers,

High Officials,

Honorable Scholars,

Esteemed Members of Press,

Distinguished Guests,

Today Ankara is not only the Capital of the Turkish Republic but also the Capital of knowledge. It is our wish to promote our country properly upon this ground.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the various parties who have supported this great Conference, of which existence has been announced to the world by the hard-working members of Turkish national press, which will be held in 18 conference halls for 6 days.

Nobody can deny that this meeting has been achieved by the efforts of a handful people; the members of the National Executive Committee and a small group of staff from Atatürk Supreme Council for Culture, Language and History. On behalf of the National Executive Committee, I would like to express my gratitude to Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, our Prime Minister, who has heartily supported us all through the preparation and organization processes of the congress and who has joined us here today despite his heavy program.

I also wish to express our gratitude to the Minister of Internal Affairs of the 60th government, Prof. Dr. Beşir Atalay, for his immense help during his post as the Minister of State and our coordinator on behalf of the 59th Government.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to our State Minister, Prof. Dr. Mehmet AYDIN, our Minister of Finance, Kemal UNAKITAN, our Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ertuğrul GÜNAY for their support and contributions.

Our special thanks go to Turgut ALTINOK, the Mayor of Keçiören, Mansur YAVAŞ, the Mayor of Beypazarı, Prof. Dr. Ali DOĞRAMACI, the rector of Bilkent University, Prof. Dr. Tahsin KESİCİ, the rector of TOBB University, and Prof. Dr. Kadri YAMAÇ, the rector of Gazi University for their support and hospitality.

I wish ICANAS 38 to contribute to the scientific progress and world peace. Greetings to each and every one of you who participate in this Congress.