



Platini floats idea of multi-country Euro 2020

Kiev (Reuters) - The 2020 European Championship could be spread across 12 or 13 cities around Europe, rather than being staged in just one or two countries, UEFA president Michel Platini said on Saturday. Turkey had been favorite to host the event in eight years' time but their bid has been complicated by Istanbul's campaign to also host the Olympics.

Film tracks illiteracy among women in eastern Turkey

In the 63-minute film 'Girls of Hope,' director Aysegul Selenga Taskent portrays the difficulties young girls in the hard scrabble region face in battling restrictive traditions, family pressures, severe weather conditions and poverty to go to school and improve their lives.

By Metin Demiras

Istanbul (Dunya) - Aysegul Selenga Taskent's new documentary film 'Girls of Hope' examines the lives of five peasant girls in the eastern province of Van and the difficulties they encounter as they seek to get an education. The film, Ms. Taskent hopes, will help improve the conditions of all girls in the region, eradicate illiteracy among women and raise living standards in the backward provinces of the country, where family incomes are only one-fifth that of western Turkey.

'Girls of Hope' was screened at this year's Ankara Film Festival from March 15-22 and the 11th Rome Independent Film Festival (RIFF) April 12-20, where it was given special mention.

Shot in remote hamlets and villages in Van, which borders Iran, the film aims to attract greater attention to the problems of women in eastern Turkey and draw more financial support for school-aged girls in need of scholarship money, and pressure the central government to take sharper lines to force tradition-bound families to send their daughters to school.

"The gulf between eastern Turkey and the rest of the country is vast. The illiteracy rate among women is near 45% in eastern and southeastern Turkey," Ms. Taskent, 35, a U.S.-educated filmmaker, said in an interview. "We chose to film in Van province because it had the second highest illiteracy rate in Turkey among women (after Sirnak province)."

Young girls in the rural areas of the vast region are generally treated by their families as chattel to be traded off to other families or married off as teenagers to

men in return for financial or economic benefits. Education is the only way the girls in the film can break out of this slavery. By going to school, getting an education, acquiring a vocation and by working, they can become independent.

Coproduction

Ms. Taskent is a lecturer in documentary filmmaking, video production and digital editing at the private Bahcesehir University in Istanbul. She has several documentary films to her credit.

Ms. Taskent co-produced the film with Delizia Flaccavento, 39, an Italian documentary photographer with whom she has collaborated in other films. Ms. Flaccavento, who has a BA in philosophy from Pisa University and a MFA Ohio University, teaches visual communications at Yeditepe University.

"Turkey is the 18th biggest economy in the world. The educational levels of its women have to increase as fast as the nation is growing if it is to reach European standards," Ms. Flaccavento said.

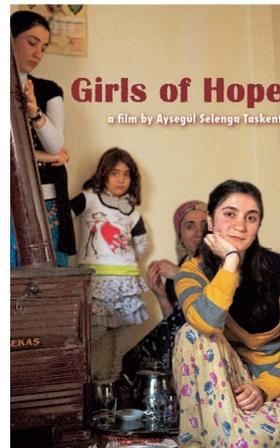
The film was shot on a shoestring budget of TL 15,000 given by the Ministry of Culture. Bahcesehir University provided cameras and other equipment, and the duo got the support of Van 100th Year University and the Association in the Support of Contemporary Living (CYDD), founded by the late Professor Turkan Saylan.

CYDD supports financially needy girls around the country seeking to continue their education.

"I went to the CYDD and they were very cooperative. They opened all the letters of girls that were getting financial sup-



Aysegul Selenga Taskent (left) produced the documentary 'Girls of Hope' in three years of filming.



port from Van province to our inspection. We chose five. We went and interviewed them and their families. The local CYDD official helped us," Ms. Taskent said.

For Ms. Taskent 'Girls of Hope' has added to her successes as a filmmaker.

Born in Ankara, the daughter of a well-known sports reporter for the state radio and television outfit TRT, she received a BA in American culture and literature from Hacettepe University in Ankara, an MA in media studies from Southampton Solent University in England and an MFA in documentary filmmaking from New York State University in Buffalo.

She has worked on documentary films on Turkish guest worker families in

Germany, orphanages, nuns, and Anatolian women.

In 2007, she completed the film 'Volga Volga,' a film about her brother, a painter suffering from schizophrenia, and her parents, with whom he lives in Ankara today.

"Volga Volga" was shown at the Cinema Writers Association (SIYAD) in Istanbul, 1001 Documentary Films Festival in Istanbul, the Berlin Turkish Film Festival, 2009 Dokumantarisit in Istanbul and the 11th Flying Broom International Women's Film Festival in Ankara, the 19th Ankara International Film Festival (where she received an Honorable Mention.) and at the Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center in Buffalo, New York.

Imtech gets order from Turkish navy

Istanbul (Dunya) - Dutch technical services provider Royal Imtech N.V. announced on Wednesday that it has signed a contract for the design and supply of all electric systems to power three Turkish Navy Auxiliary vessels, consisting of one Submarine Rescue Mother Ship (MoShip) and two Rescue and Towing Ships (RATships).

All ships will be built by Istanbul Shipyard in Tuzla in Turkey and are scheduled to be delivered to the Turkish Navy by mid of 2015.

Rene van der Bruggen, CEO Imtech: 'Imtech is increasingly active in the Turkish market. In the second half of 2010 we acquired Elkon, specialized in electrical services, automation and alarm, monitoring and control in the Turkish marine market. Combining knowledge and collaboration with existing Imtech competences makes it possible to win new orders, like the new order for the Turkish navy. Recently, we also acquired AE Arma-Elektropank, active in technical solutions in the Turkish buildings and energy markets. Together with them we are also working on synergy advantages. By this we are able to substantially increase our Turkish activities.'

The MoShip will be capable to provide lifesaving support to a disabled submarine and evacuate the crew. The other two vessels are capable of towing ships as well as firefighting. Both ships will be equipped with modern rescue systems. The ships can perform underwater repair works and are specialized in wreck removal.

Iran gas flow cut after blast

Istanbul (Reuters) - An explosion has cut off gas flow in a natural gas pipeline running from Iran to Turkey within the Turkish section of the line, a Turkish Energy Ministry official said on Thursday. The official said Turkey's gendarmerie security forces were investigating the reason for the explosion, which he said could have been caused by a militant attack. "There is no fire. There is no problem with the gas pressure," the same official said.

Isbank gets \$380 mln loans

Istanbul (Reuters) - Turkey's Isbank said on Friday it obtained \$225 million and 125 million euro (\$155.33 million) in loans.

Isbank said the maturity of \$225 million part is five years and the maturity of 125 million euro part is 12 years. The loan denominated in euros is from the European Bank for Reconstruction (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB), Isbank said in a statement made to the Istanbul Stock Exchange. Isbank described the loans as "securitization" loans.

Top labor relations expert dies

Istanbul (Dunya) - Rafet Ibrahimoglu, 82, who died last week in Turkey, was the nation's top expert on labor relations and a former deputy. He served as secretary general of the Employers' Association prior to the September 12, 1980, military takeover, a time when the country was torn with labor unrest, left-right feuding and political violence.

He also served on the board of directors of the International Labor Organization, based in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1975 to 1978 and from 1981 to 1984 and was a deputy with the military-backed Nationalist Democracy Party (MDP) from 1983 to 1987.

From 1965-1980, he served with TISK as director of foreign relations, deputy secretary general and secretary general, the number two in negotiating collective labor contracts.

He also served on the board of Petkim, the petrochemical concern, from 1992 to 1993.

Akenerji to sell stake in Akcez

Istanbul (Reuters) - Turkish power producer Akenerji said on Thursday it will sell 22.5 percent of its stake in Akcez unit to Turkish group Akkok and 22.5 percent to Czech utility CEZ, in a statement made to the Istanbul Stock Exchange.

Turk Telekom gets EBRD loan

Istanbul (Reuters) - The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will support the expansion of broadband internet services in eastern regions of Turkey with a 100 million euro (\$127 million) loan to landline operator Turk Telekom, the bank said in a statement on Monday.

The proceeds of the loan will be used to finance capital expenditures for fixed broadband network expansion in the regions of Adana, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Kayseri, Samsun and Trabzon in Turkey, the EBRD said.

Since the beginning of its operations in Turkey, the EBRD has committed close to 2 billion euros to various sectors of the economy such as energy and infrastructure sectors, mobilising additional investment of over 5 billion euros.

Generals look to life beyond prison bars

Twenty percent of the commanding generals of the secularist Turkish Armed Forces as well as scores of retired generals languish in jail on charges of attempting to overthrow the pro-Islamist Ak Party government.

By Daren Butler

Istanbul (Reuters) - They once bestrode Turkey the masters of all they surveyed. Governments were swept aside, a prime minister dispatched to the gallows. Even in quiet times, from their staff headquarters opposite parliament, they commanded obedience.

Now around 20% of serving generals are in prison accused of plots against Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, imaginatively codenamed Sledgehammer, Ergenekon, Blonde Girl, and Moonlight.

So sudden has been this reversal that the generals appear robbed of their voice. Erdogan has for now succeeded in his aim of taming the "Pashas", officers, who disdain his Islamist roots. But as coup trials stutter over technical appeals, his position ranging over a demoralized military has its perils.

Turkey's military guards the front line in the West's campaign against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and may yet be called upon to fight. Last Friday saw a Turkish warplane shot down by Syrian air defenses. Public sympathy may grow as fears of a war spread. An officer in jail is one less in the barracks.

"We spend our time writing letters and books," said one senior officer held at a military prison in the Hadimkoy neighborhood of Istanbul.

"To explain how the future of our country has been darkened, putting the screams of our souls down on paper," he added in comments relayed to Reuters through his lawyer.

The resort to literature finds an ironic echo in the past.

Bulent Ecevit, a prime minister arrested and interned by the generals in a 1980 army coup, wrote poetry during his captivity, his verse mostly an avowal of love to his wife, Rahsan.

Erdogan himself fell foul of the military in the years before his election and served a jail term for publicly reciting a verse declaring "The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets" - words considered by a court to be incitement to religious militancy.

Now the Pashas take their turn in court. Even the 94-year-old leader of the 1980 putsch, General Kenan Evren, is on trial over hangings, torture and disappearances.

"I never really thought that one day I would see this," wrote Mehmet Ali Birand, author of books on Turkey's military.

The main military prison at Hasdal in Istanbul is now so overcrowded that many serving of-

rades at Silivri prison.

Parliament is also scrutinizing the activities of the army pension fund OYAK.

Calling off the lawyers?

Last July, the top brass appeared to throw in the towel, when the chief of staff quit along with three other retiring generals to protest the detention of comrades and interference in the annual promotion round.

The resignations allowed Erdogan to install a chief of staff of his choice, General Necdet Ozel, and relations between the government and the military have since improved.

"Ozel is displaying behavior that suggests he is more in line with the government and is more keen to meet the government's wishes," said retired Major General Armanoglu, now an analyst at a think-tank in Ankara.

Perhaps mindful of the problem Ozel faces stamping authority over a military shell-shocked by mass arrests, Erdogan recently criticized special prosecutors for ordering too many detentions.

Critics had hitherto seen the prosecutors as "attack dogs" for Erdogan's government as it strove to bring the army to heel and convince the electorate that the AKP was its best bet to break Turkey's cycle of coups.

His AK Party is now working on plans to dissolve the courts - a measure that could result in a collapse of the cases and undermine Erdogan's credibility.

"The more likely scenario if it falls apart is that gradually the imprisoned officers would be released on bail and the cases would continue," Istanbul-based security analyst Gareth Jenkins said. "It would just be allowed to peter out but they would be released from prison."

Erdogan may calculate, though, that the job is done.

Opposition parties are weak, the military has been subordinated by political reforms and

officers were transferred to the smaller Hadimkoy, while retired officers are held at Silivri jail outside the city, where the biggest trials are being held.

Sitting beside a computer with a screen-saver set to an image of secular state founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, a former top commander described the army as the victim of a campaign to rob it of popular respect.

"These steps were designed to render the armed forces ineffective and make them an untrustworthy institution in the eyes of the people," the old soldier said at his Istanbul office.

An annual European Union survey showed Turks trust in the military slid from 90 percent in 2004 to 70 percent in 2010.

Once Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) swept to power in 2002 it became locked in a struggle with a military that saw itself as custodian to the secular vision of Ataturk, the soldier-statesman who founded the republic in 1923 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

The scales tipped decisively in the AKP's favor in 2007, when the party faced down generals who tried to stop parliament electing Abdullah Gul as president on the grounds that he was a former Islamist and his wife wore an Islamic headscarf.

A low point for the military came in January, when prosecutors hauled in retired General Ilker Basbug, chief of staff between 2008 to 2010, and accused him of being one of Ergenekon's leaders.

Basbug, regarded as one of the most cerebral chiefs the army has had, described the charges as "tragi-comic" before being sent to join old com-



Former Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Ilker Basbug (left) and his aide General Ergin Saygun (above) are among hundreds of serving and retired generals on trial in the various coup attempt cases.