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## **TURKISH PRESIDENT ERDOGAN TO VISIT GEORGIA IN SPRING**

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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will visit Georgia in the spring of 2020 on the invitation of Georgian PM Giorgi Gakharia.

The decision comes after the meeting of Erdogan and Gakharia in Ankara yesterday.

Erdogan described Gakharia as a leader and a dear friend.

Erdogan said that he and Gakharia expressed the will to further strengthen trade and economic cooperation.

Today, we once again express our will to boost our trade turnover from 1.5 billion to 3 billion USD, Erdogan said.

He stated that the scheduled meetings of the Turkey-Georgia Economic Council [the meeting has not been held since 2005] and the Strategic Partnership Council later this year will further this goal.

Erdogan said that Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan energy and transport projects have led to the creation of a belt of stability from the Caucasus to Anatolia.

He said that Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipelines and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline have turned the region into an energy hub.

Significant steps have been made in the transport field. Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway is a milestone in this regard. By launching this railway link, three friendly nations [Georgia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan] have been connected to one other more closely. The railway is a significant segment in the middle of a route passing from London to Beijing, Erdogan said.

Erdogan stated that with the deal back in 2011, we not only lifted the visa requirement with Georgia, but ensured passport-free travel across the border.

Turkey is the largest trade partner of Georgia and our citizens can travel by merely presenting their ID cards at the border. We are very happy with this achievement, Erdogan said.

Gakharia confirmed that Turkey is Georgia's largest trade partner, though we can double our trade turnover in the next few years.

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