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TURKCELL TO SUPPORT THE CHAMPIONS OF THE FUTURE WITH “RUNNING TO THE FUTURE”

Turkcell will provide professional training support to 160 talented athletes between the ages of 12 and 16 in Turkey’s 11 provinces under the “Running to the Future” project developed jointly with the General Directorate of Youth and Sports

General Director of Youth and Sports Yunus Akgül and Turkcell CEO Süreyya Ciliv kicked off the “Running to the Future” project with a protocol signature ceremony at the Ataköy Olympic House in İstanbul on April 8th with the Minister of State in charge of Sports Affairs Murat Başesgiöglu and the Turkish Coordination Representative to the United Nations Halide Çaylan in attendance. Turkcell and the General Directorate of Youth and Sports aim to train successful athletes that would represent Turkey at the Olympic games with the project.

Included in the **National Plan for the Alliance of Civilizations**, a United Nations project, “Running to the Future” is intended to expand Turkey’s roster of successful national athletes by providing special training to youths in the 12-to-16 age bracket with the potential to stand out in individual sports.

Initially, **160 talented young athletes** to be selected in **11 provinces** will receive special training in **six different sport branches**. The training to be given by special trainers seven days a week in the branches of **Weightlifting, Skiing, Swimming, Tennis, Athletics, and Visually Challenged Cycling** will help prepare national sportsmen to compete in the tournaments and meets to take place in 2010, the London Paralympic Games in 2012, and the Olympic Games in 2016.

Would-be national sportsmen will be trained in skiing in Tunceli and Hakkari, tennis in İstanbul and Antalya, swimming in Kastamonu and Edirne, weightlifting in Konya, athletics-throwing in

Adana, athletics-medium distance running in Bursa, and visually challenged cycling in Ankara and Tokat.

In his speech at the ceremony, the **Minister of State in charge of Sports Affairs Murat Başesgiođlu** underscored the importance of the “Running to the Future” project as regards the raising of successful sportsmen with a bright future. **Minister Başesgiođlu** said, “Raising sportsmen in a large number of branches is the most important item on our agenda in order to see our country enjoy outstanding success in the Olympic games. This project has been shaped to turn this vision into reality and it’s encouraging to see it supported by a company like Turkcell that stands out in its branch of industry.”

Also addressing the ceremonial assembly, **Turkcell CEO Süreyya Ciliz** touched upon the importance of the “Running to the Future” project in transforming Turkey’s potential of a predominantly young population into an opportunity for achievements in sports. **Ciliz** said, “It’s important to us that Turkey enjoys in individual sports the success it achieved in team sports. We’re confident that continuous and rigorous training under professional trainers will enable our sportsmen to achieve the success we long for. That’s why we at Turkcell have focused on the ‘Running to the Future’ project and we’re happy to support successful young sportsmen.”

The Provincial Directorates of Youth and Sports will announce and conduct screenings among applicants in the 12-to-16 age group jointly with the respective sport federations during April. The training is planned to commence early May upon completion of the screenings.

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