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Microsoft CEO Ballmer:

"We will work to make Turkey a software development center"

Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, took part in the opening ceremony of Microsoft's newly announced Innovation Center at Bilkent University's Cyberpark with Alpaslan Korkmaz, President of the Prime Ministry Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey. Ballmer noted that Microsoft's support to software development, innovation and R&D areas in Turkey will continue and went on to say: "Microsoft's DreamSpark program, a tool to let young people easily gain access to software development technologies is being extended to include high school students in Turkey." Ballmer later held talks with President Abdullah Gul, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Minister of Transportation Binali Yildirim and Minister of Education Huseyin Celik, along with prominent businessmen.

21 April 2009, Ankara - Supporting the development of the IT sector in Turkey and creating assets for the economy with its "Turkey Develops with ICT" vision, Microsoft Turkey held a high-level meeting in Ankara. Microsoft CEO, Steve Ballmer, and Alpaslan Korkmaz, President of the Prime Ministry Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey, jointly announced the opening of the Microsoft Innovation Center in a press conference.

During his short visit to Turkey, Ballmer met with President Abdullah Gul, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Minister of Transportation Binali Yildirim, Minister of Education Huseyin Celik and prominent businessmen.

Operating in the Cyberpark at Bilkent University in Ankara, the Microsoft Innovation Center houses innovative R&D software projects. Microsoft, by supplying funds, high-tech, specialists and counselors, intends to assist its partners in developing solutions for both the company itself and governmental institutions. This will lead to a boost in software development and R&D, while Turkey's overall level of innovation will also improve.

 "We will work to make Turkey a software development center"

Speaking at the press conference at the Ankara Sheraton, Ballmer noted the strong probability of Turkey becoming the software development center of Europe and its region, saying:

"Turkey, with its vibrant economy and technologically-inclined young population, has great potential. By following the right strategies and introducing new training programs, it can become an important software development center. Microsoft aims to support the development of the ICT industry, and fulfill the potential of Turkey with its ecosystem formed by its partners."

Ballmer defined the new Microsoft Innovation Center as one of the best examples of investment in this field and went on to say:
"Opening the Microsoft Innovation Center is our way of expressing our will to contribute to the development of the Turkish software sector. With this center, we intend to collaborate with public and private institutions on improving the R&D and culture of innovation. "

Projects in fields like healthcare, education and e-public services are developed by academicians, students, entrepreneurs and private sector specialists in the Microsoft Innovation Center. R&D studies on mobile technologies and robotics are scheduled to start next year.

Young people who are skilled in developing video games will make use of the Game Incubation Center at the Microsoft Innovation Center, where they will find the right platform to realize their bright and creative ideas. Microsoft will supply them with technology, a knowledge base and hardware.

At the press conference, held with the participation of many members of press from Istanbul and Ankara, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer gave some good news for youth, saying:

"We are also excited to extend the DreamSpark program to include high school students. With the DreamSpark program, we give students the means to develop software using the latest technologies in order to help them gain capabilities and the knowledge needed in business life."

Turkey ranks the sixth most benefiting country from the DreamSpark program out of a total of 107 countries. Young developers attending the program are free to use the Microsoft knowledge base to develop their software projects.

Ballmer held talks with President Gul and Prime Minister

During his one-day visit to Turkey, Steve Ballmer was welcomed by President Abdullah Gul, as well as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. During these talks, Ballmer expressed Microsoft's point of view concerning Turkey, emphasizing that they will continue with their investments in the country and that they are committed to supporting the software economy.

During his official contacts, Ballmer also met with Binali Yildirim, Minister of Transportation, and Huseyin Celik, Minister of Education. In scope of these talks, the issues such as the possible contributions to be made by Microsoft for increasing e-state applications, as well as competency in information technologies were discussed. Ballmer then came together with the senior managers of the leading companies in Turkey that Microsoft is in cooperation, and held talks on a series of matters regarding existing and future projects involving Microsoft.