GTA SUMMIT

ISTANBUL

From October 7th through 9th, Advocates travelled from around the world to be in Istanbul for the third GTA Summit. The Summit was organised by the leaders of Tech Türkiye Advocates, with a special thank you to Ata Argüder and Yildiz Tuğba Kara for all their efforts to deliver a fantastic summit.

DAY ONE: OPENING DAY

Alongside leaders from Tech Türkiye Advocates at the offices of HIB, the Türkiye Export Services Agency, more than 25 Advocates from around the world gathered for a day of speeches, presentations and conversations to share insights on the Turkish tech and innovation ecosystem and the importance of connecting to the world.

The official opening included a number of government and agency officials welcoming the delegation including:

- **Dr. Fatih Özer**, Secretary General, Services Exporters Association (HIB)
- **İlhan Bağören**, Board Member, HIB and Founder & CEO of Telenity
- **F. Derya Koç**, Head of Department of the Türkiye Ministry of Trade
- **Dr. Kaan Masatçi**, Manager, Investment and Finance Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye

A session on climatetech and energy transition was led by **Jan Lozek**, Managing Partner of Future Energy Ventures, who also delivered a keynote address.

Jan then joined a panel session with:

- **Deniz Emre Dağ**, Chief Strategy & Business Development Officer, Borusan Holding
- **Berk Pakkan**, Corporate Venture Capital Manager, Zorlu Corporate Ventures

Russ Shaw moderated a session with **Randel Bryan** and **Olivia Soan**, representatives from London Tech Week, to discuss the event and plans for 2027. Türkiye has the largest pavilion at London Tech Week with plans to continue into the future.

DAY ONE: OPENING DAY (CONT.)

Several GTA announcements were made during the day, including:

- The launch of the new Centre for Global Tech Advocacy - read more in IT Brief.
- New GTA (geographic) groups in Guangzhou, Detroit, DC and Kenya

The afternoon featured a GTA 'World Tour' with Advocates travelling from all parts of the world including:

- **Dr. Cristina Amor Maclang**, Lead of Tech Philippines Advocates
- **John Zai**, Lead of Tech China Advocates
- **Jeanette Carlsson**, Lead of Tech Nordic Advocates
- **Richard Lowe**, Lead of Tech West England Advocates
- **Anders Nilsson**, Lead of Tech Italy Advocates
- **Esther O'Callaghan**, Lead of Tech Netherlands Advocates
- **Luis Novella**, Lead of Tech Florida Advocates
- **Rie Hamaguchi** representing Tech Japan Advocates
- **Akosua Annobil**, Lead of Tech Ghana Advocates

Two new GTA working groups were announced:

- **GTA Innovation Funding**, announced by Chandila Fernando and Richard Lowe
- **GTA Cyber**, announced by Luis Novella

The Day One programme concluded with a fireside chat between Anders and Russ discussing their attendance at the three GTA Summits held to date in China, India and now Istanbul, reflecting on the growth and dynamism of the community.

Many thanks to Dr. Fatih Ozer and Ilhan Bagoren for hosting us at the Hizmet İhracatçıları Birliği (HIB) offices.

Towards the end of the day, we travelled to Fark Labs, a global innovation hub, in Maslak, hosted by Ahu Serter, the Founder of the Labs as well as two of its funds. Ahu gave an excellent overview of Fark Labs as well as the work she is leading at Arya to support and provide investment for female founders.

DAY TWO: BRIDGE DAY

The focus on Day Two was to go deeper into the Turkish and Central Asian tech ecosystems. The day was hosted by Galatasaray University, one of the premier universities in Türkiye.

The first session featured the three co-leads of Tech Türkiye Advocates: Ata, Yildiz and also Baran Kılıçer – they shared their insights and observations on the ecosystem having worked and lived within and beyond Türkiye.

We were then introduced to Ipek Celiksoz who shared her story and background going from chemical engineering to running startups and supporting startup ecosystems and becoming the Director of Istanbul Slush'D.

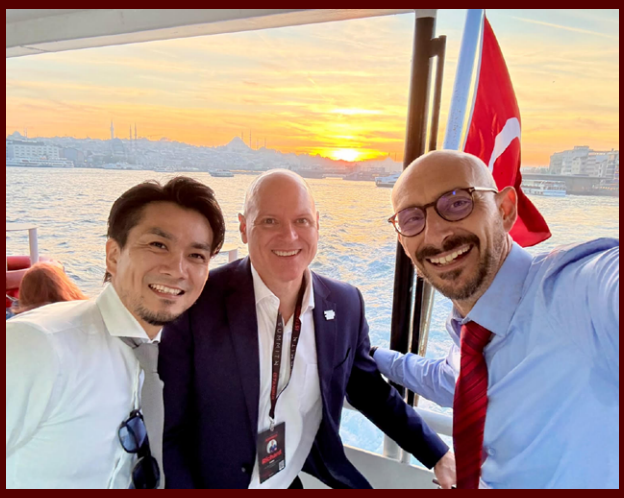
The last session was a deeper dive into the Central Asia tech and innovation ecosystem and featured three great speakers with moderation from Ata:

- **Özgün Ünaldı**, Vice President, Domino Ventures
- **Sabina Babayeva**, Head of Tenity
- **Dinara Abdizhaparova**, Founder & CEO of Alem

The group was then invited to have lunch at the professors' canteen at the university with stunning views of the Bosphorus.

With the sun shining and a brief gap in the schedule, many in the delegation opted to take a boat trip on the Bosphorus.

We then moved from the European side to the Asian side of Istanbul for a reception hosted by leaders from London Tech Week to promote attendance and participation at LTW 2027.



DAY THREE: ECOSYSTEM VISITS

The third and final day featured three visits to showcase the diversity of the Turkish ecosystem.

First stop was StartGate, a gaming accelerator in the Maslak section of Istanbul. There were a number of presentations followed by a tour of the facility.

Dilara Kereci from the Lorien Accelerator shared an insightful presentation on the Turkish gaming sector and its dramatic growth over the past decade. She shared that 70% of Turkish startup investment goes into gaming startups and scaleups.

We then travelled from Maslak to the Asian side of Istanbul for a visit and tour of MEXT in Ataşehir. MEXT, established by the Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Industries in 2020, is one of the world's most comprehensive digital, green, AI transformation and capability-building centres.

The day concluded at the rooftop Herb Garden at the Peninsula Istanbul Hotel in Karaköy. We heard from Özden Akyıldız, Founder of Komşuköy, and Samuel Linder, Executive Assistant Manager at Peninsula Hotels, the garden, using software and technology grows vegetables, fruit and herbs for the hotel's kitchens in more than 100 raised beds. It was a fantastic way to conclude an incredible three day Summit.

THANK YOU!

My thanks to all the Advocates, speakers, hosts and presenters on a fantastic Summit. A very big thank you to Ata and Yildiz who worked tirelessly to bring together a special three day visit.

We have asked those who joined the Advocates delegation to provide a very brief testimonial to capture the experience, you can read these on the following pages.

TECH TÜRKİYE ADVOCATES

GLOBAL TECH ADVOCATES

TESTIMONIALS

The value of our global community leaders coming together in person cannot be overstated. Across three inspiring days sharing knowledge and insights from across the network, while discovering Türkiye's thriving tech ecosystem, from gaming to robotics - the GTA Summit embodied the spirit of our global community's commitment to connecting and collaborating across borders.

ESTHER O'CALLAGHAN OBE

GTA Advisory Board Member,
Tech Netherlands Advocates

There's something infectious about Istanbul: ambitious people, spirited conversations, and the sense that we were only scratching the surface of what we could achieve together. Ata, Yildiz , Baran and the GTA team brought Türkiye's potential to life. I came home with new friends and ideas that deserve a second conversation, preferably around a table in Türkiye.

FERNANDO CHANDILA

GTA Innovation Funding

ASEAN itself represents an economy of more than four trillion US dollars, we have a very young, digitally native population. And this is why we are seeing opportunities across FinTech, AI, HealthTech, digital payments, e-commerce, cybersecurity, ClimateTech, DeepTech and digital public infrastructure. The opportunity is to connect these markets with the right technology, capital and expertise. And together with GTA led by Russ, we can create reach into the wider Global Majority.

DR ALEXANDER TITOV

Tech Philippines Advocates

The GTA Summit was an eye-opening experience that broadened my knowledge and perspectives, sparked fresh insights, and fostered meaningful connections through diverse and engaging discussions that went far beyond a typical conference. Being part of the GTA community and its leadership inspires me to set ambitious goals, push boundaries, and contribute to shaping a better future by advancing technology and strengthening the Global Tech Advocates community.

RIO FUKAYA

Tech Japan Advocates

The GTA Summit in Istanbul brought together leaders from Türkiye and around the world in a way no conference agenda could; the relationships built over three days are the real outcome. Thank you to Ata, Yildiz and the Tech Türkiye Advocates team, and to the sponsors and working group supporters: Tech4Good really does take a village.

LUIS NOVELLA

Tech Florida Advocates

It was wonderful to join my fellow GTA leaders and experience first hand Türkiye's rapidly accelerating technology and innovation ecosystem, driven by a national push to transform the country into a premier global hub for tech entrepreneurship, deep tech, and advanced research and development (R&D).

JEANETTE CARLSSON

Tech Nordic Advocates

TESTIMONIALS

The GTA Summit demonstrated the real strength of bringing different technology ecosystems together around one table. My visits to Fark Labs and Entertech Istanbul Teknokent also gave me a much clearer understanding of Türkiye's capabilities in industrial innovation and technology commercialisation, areas where I believe there is strong complementarity with China and real potential to develop more practical, long-term collaboration through the GTA network.

JOHN ZAI

Tech China Advocates

My visit to Istanbul with Global Tech Advocates offered a valuable opportunity to explore new markets and learn from the people building technology ecosystems around the world. Thank you to everyone who made our time in Istanbul so valuable. I came away with new insights, stronger relationships and renewed belief in what this global community can achieve.

RICHARD LOWE

Tech West England Advocates

The GTA Istanbul Summit showed the power of bringing local ecosystems into a global conversation. As a Türkiye-based entrepreneur and advisor, it was a pleasure to share our ecosystem's ambition and creativity with fellow Advocates and explore opportunities to collaborate across borders. Thank you again for your leadership and for creating a community that keeps these connections growing beyond the Summit. Looking forward to reading the blog and staying connected with everyone.

SAMET ENSAR SARI

Tech Turkiye Advocates

It was a true honor for me to represent Tech Philippines Advocates and ASEAN region in general at the global GTA leaders gathering in Istanbul. Technology is creating new forms of economic connection. We are connecting technology with investment, innovation with market access, startups with capital, and talent with opportunity. Special appreciation to Russ for bringing all of us together from the different parts of the globe to create meaningful and measurable impact together.

DR CHRISTINA AMOR MACLANG

Tech Philippines Advocates

This was my third Summit. I knew it would be a great experience, but even with high expectations, I was absolutely amazed and blown away by the people, the stories, the insights, the places, the culture, the hospitality. Thank you!

ANDERS NILSSON

Tech Italy Advocates

Blown away with the organised, vibrant and sustainable tech sector in Turkey and the creative energy to share, mentor and happily collaborate with others. This was an experience to capitalise on the various collaborative opportunities available at the moment.

SHAISTA MUKADAM

Global Tech Advocates