

Bringing Peace Of Mind

An Interview with Ahmet Mücahid Ören, Executive Chairman, İhlas Holding

EDITORS' NOTE Ahmet Mücahid Ören is the Executive Chairman of İhlas Holding, a Turkish corporation with operations spanning construction, media, technology, healthcare, and education for more than 50 years. He led mass media operations from the 1990s onward and assumed the chairmanship of İhlas Holding in February 2013. He attaches particular importance to organizing human resources around a common vision and has promoted growth through the adoption of global business practices for nearly three decades. In 2006, after TGRT TV had built a nationwide audience of millions, he oversaw its sale to News Corporation, the American mass media company, in what was the first significant foreign direct investment in the Turkish broadcasting industry. Under his stewardship, İhlas News Agency grew from a local wire service into a global news organization and has been publicly traded since its initial public offering in 2021. In recognition of this achievement, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Yeni Yüzyıl University. Aside from his business initiatives, he is actively involved with international organizations including the Atlantic Council, the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the World Economic Forum, and the American-Turkish Council. He also serves as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Latvia, based in New York, and holds dual citizenship of the United States and Turkey.

COMPANY BRIEF Drawing strength from its deep-rooted heritage, İhlas Holding (ihlas.com.tr) aims to enhance quality of life and contribute to the future of society in every sector it operates, with a wide range of activities



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spanning from media to manufacturing and marketing, from construction to energy and investment activities, as well as healthcare and education, steadfastly advancing its vision of sustainable development. Advancing its energy investments with a long-term strategic perspective, İhlas Holding aspires to be a leading force in the clean energy transformation not only in Turkey, but also across Central Asia. İhlas Holding puts people at the heart of every decision and continues to build its reputation as a trusted, high-quality, and stable brand both in Turkey and worldwide.

Will you discuss your career journey?

I started my career as Technology Director of the daily *Türkiye* newspaper, where I helped bring computerized publishing and production systems into the newsroom, a pioneering effort for the Turkish press, moving the newspaper to the forefront of the national media. I also modernized the children's magazine *Türkiye Çocuk Dergisi* and launched TGRT television in 1991, one of the early steps in Turkey's shift toward private broadcasting. From 1993 to 2013, I served as Deputy Chairman and CEO of İhlas Holding, working across construction, marketing, healthcare, and education as the group expanded far beyond its media roots. In 2013, I became Executive Chairman, where I now oversee the group's operations and investments across a growing range of industries.

Throughout my career, I've always been drawn to building concepts in their earliest stages, whether a digital newsroom, a television channel, or a new business. That has shaped

how I approach leadership and continues to guide what we are building and achieving at İhlas Holding.

How do you define İhlas Holding's mission?

At its core, our mission is to improve quality of life through the sectors we operate in, including media, construction, healthcare, education, manufacturing, and increasingly energy. While those are very different industries, the common thread is consistency. Our founding motto, "*buzur veren*," meaning bringing peace of mind, captures that ambition and commitment. We strive to be a trusted, stable presence wherever we can make a difference.

We also take our heritage seriously. İhlas began with a single newspaper in 1970, and over more than half a century has grown into a group of 26 companies with more than 3,000 employees across multiple industries. Throughout that growth, we've remained focused on long-term thinking, continued innovation, and putting people at the center of everything we do.

Will you provide an overview of İhlas Holding's businesses?

We're a diversified group, but our businesses are connected by a common purpose. Media was where we began, and it remains a core part of who we are through *Türkiye* newspaper and our broadcasting operations.

Construction and real estate have been major drivers of our growth for decades. We've delivered more than 25,000 residential and commercial units across a wide range of projects, and we continue to see significant opportunities in that sector. Healthcare and education are two areas where we can have a direct impact on people's lives. Through our hospitals and schools, some of the most recognized institutions in Turkey, we serve

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communities across the country. In manufacturing and trade, we produce and market consumer goods that reach customers in dozens of countries. İhlas also has one of the widest direct distribution networks in Turkey, rooted in *Türkiye* newspaper’s pioneering door-to-door delivery system, and few households haven’t been touched by an İhlas product or representative, from newspapers to vacuum cleaners and water purifiers.

Because energy is the one thing that can improve everyone’s life, it has become an increasingly important focus for us. We’ve held licenses in this space since the late 1990s, and today we’re making long-term investments in clean energy in both Turkey and Central Asia. Projects like the Kazarman and Kokomeeren hydroelectric power plants reflect our belief that energy can strengthen cooperation between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan while helping position the region as an energy bridge connecting Europe, China, and the Middle East.

Where do you see the greatest opportunities for growth?

Energy, without question. We’re entering a period of enormous transformation. The shift toward cleaner, more resilient energy systems will be one of the defining economic stories of this decade, and Turkey’s geography puts us in a unique position as both a market and a bridge to Central Asia. As the global energy landscape evolves, investments in reliable, renewable energy are becoming increasingly strategic. Today’s barrels are tomorrow’s electrons, and the infrastructure required to meet that demand is only beginning to take shape. That’s why we’re making long-term investments in clean energy across Turkey and Central Asia. We see an opportunity not only to generate

reliable power, but also to strengthen cooperation between countries and help position the region as an energy bridge connecting Europe, China, and the Middle East.

How is AI impacting the way İhlas Holding operates?

Operationally, we’re using it to make our manufacturing and logistics more efficient. At the same time, I think it’s making human judgment even more valuable, especially in media, where trust matters most. I also try to keep some perspective. We built our reputation by embracing new technology. We introduced computerized publishing to Turkish newspapers decades ago, so AI feels less like a radical shift and more like the next chapter. The key is to adopt it thoughtfully, in ways that create real value rather than change for its own sake. At a time when so much feels disruptive and uncertain, I think our role is to be a source of stability – the peace of mind our founding motto promises, even as the tools around us keep changing.

What do you see as the role of private sector leadership in advancing energy resilience, long-term investment, and regional cooperation?

I think the private sector has to be a true partner to the government in this space, not just a contractor carrying out someone else’s plan. Building energy resilience requires long-term investment, and companies are often well positioned to make those kinds of commitments. Hydroelectric projects are a good example. Partnerships between Turkey and Central Asia can do much more than generate electricity. They create shared infrastructure, strengthen economic ties, create jobs, and build long-term trust between countries. That’s how we see our role at İhlas Holding. We want to invest in projects

that create lasting value, not just deliver a single asset in a single country.

What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership?

Patience paired with discipline. Big investments, whether in energy, healthcare, or media, don’t happen overnight. If you’re focused only on short-term results, it’s easy to make decisions that undermine long-term value. You have to be patient enough to let a strategy develop and disciplined enough to stay focused on the long term.

I’d also say it’s important to stay close to the work. My career began in technology and media, and that hands-on experience has shaped how I lead today. Even now, I make it a point to go into the details myself, because I think leaders make better decisions when they understand the work firsthand. I think the best leaders understand the details of their business because they’ve spent time doing the work themselves.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?

Go toward what’s new and still forming, not just what’s already established. Some of my best experiences came from being part of something new, whether it was helping digitize a newsroom or launching a television channel. In each case, there wasn’t an established playbook. Today, I still feel that same excitement being part of the renewable energy transformation. You have to figure things out as you go, and that’s what makes those experiences so rewarding.

I’d also say to take technology and innovation seriously, whatever field you’re in. Whether you work in construction, healthcare, media, or something else entirely, the people who understand the tools reshaping their industry will have more opportunities than those who don’t. ●

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