

# 15 years of **RKB** in Türkiye

In 2025, RKB celebrates 15 years since the start of RKB Rulman Türkiye. The decision to enter the Turkish market in May 2010 was based on a clear recognition of the country's industrial relevance, particularly in heavy sectors like steel and cement. From the beginning, RKB's goal was not just to supply bearings, but to build a long-term presence grounded in technical competence, reliability, and close customer support.

## Strategic entry into a growing economy

Türkiye's industrial landscape was already evolving in 2010, and since then, it has continued to expand its role in global manufacturing. The steel industry, for example, has positioned the country among the top producers in Europe, driven by modernisation and export growth. The cement industry, supported by large-scale infrastructure projects, has reached a comparable level. These developments aligned well with RKB's focus on heavy industry and formed a solid foundation for long-term investment.

## Why a local branch was essential

Establishing RKB Rulman Türkiye was more than a commercial move. It was a commitment to the market. A physical presence enabled faster response times, stronger partnerships, and better logistical support. It also signalled trust and accountability, which are essential in sectors where reliability and engineering assistance matter as much as the product itself.

## Overcoming early challenges

Like many new entrants, RKB faced initial

barriers, like brand recognition and a lack of established local relationships. The Turkish bearing market was already competitive and relationship-driven, so the absence of an in-country footprint could easily have stalled progress. To overcome this, RKB focused on direct engagement: participating in fairs, organising joint customer visits, and offering hands-on technical support. These efforts helped bridge the trust gap and gradually built a reputation grounded in performance rather than promotion.

As RKB celebrates its 15th year in Türkiye, our goal is to become a lasting



brand and deliver long-term value. Our greatest strengths are our continuous field presence, extensive inventory, and fast delivery. However, we strive to be our customers' preferred choice not only because of these advantages but also due to the high quality of our products and the added value of our services.  
Emre Cırık - CRM RKB Rulman Türkiye



### Focused growth through technical strength

RKB's early strategy in Türkiye centred on the metals and cement sectors, two industries that demand durability and precision. Rather than compete on price alone, the company emphasised product reliability, field support, and local availability. This focus allowed RKB to identify underserved needs and differentiate itself through tailored solutions and consistent technical backup. As the operation matured, RKB broadened its reach. While steel remains the largest sector served, from upstream to downstream in both long and flat products, other industries such as aluminium, cement, and specialised construction have become important contributors to the business. This diversification has made the operation more resilient and reinforced RKB's role as a trusted technical partner.

### Milestones that defined the market position

The opening of the Istanbul branch was

a turning point, allowing the company to stock and deliver products locally. Securing long-term supply agreements with major steel producers further cemented RKB's position. Active involvement in events such as Ankiros and ISRS 2025, where RKB served as a silver sponsor, helped raise visibility and connected the brand to ongoing industry developments. Organizing training seminars and offering on-site technical support have also been central to the company's growth. In line with RKB's market development strategy, the ongoing and dynamic collaboration between RKB Europe and RKB Rulman has played a vital role. Regular training sessions held at the European headquarters have kept the extended network and customers informed about the latest technological advancements while providing practical, hands-on experience. This continuous exchange of knowledge and expertise has fostered a unified approach and significantly strengthened RKB's market presence.

### Product applications and engineering value

RKB bearings are used in some of the most critical components of industrial operations. In steel production, for example, they are installed in 2Hi rolling mill stands, continuous slab caster segment rollers, WR and BUR of 4Hi rolling mills, WR, BUR, and IMR of 6Hi rolling mills, as well as other critical and non-critical equipment throughout the process flow. In the aluminium sector, RKB supplies four-row tapered and multi-row bearings for WR and BUR in cold, hot, and foil rolling mills. These are products developed through years of collaboration with OEMs. In cement production, RKB bearings are installed in equipment such as vertical mills, crushers, and roller presses. Here, performance and uptime are critical, especially as production lines often run continuously under heavy loads. RKB's stock and technical support in Türkiye have helped meet these demands, frequently stepping in when other suppliers were unable to fulfil delivery or performance requirements.

### Custom solutions and project highlights

RKB's flexibility as a manufacturer allows

it to address non-standard requests with tailored solutions. One example is a revamp project in the aluminium industry, where a customer aimed to increase rolling line speeds without changing the core machine structure. RKB helped redesign the bearing arrangement in the WR of the related 4Hi aluminium mill, replacing the standard TQO four row tapered roller bearing setup with a multiroll/four row cylindrical roller bearing combined with an axial bearing. The new design handled higher temperatures, enabled the targeted increase in production speed, and mitigated the risk of potential damage in production, with continuous support from RKB's TTU department during the testing and operational stages. Another key project from the steel upstream division involved supplying more than 20 tons of TORB bearings for twin-strand continuous slab caster segment rollers in a major steel plant. Following a successful trial in 2020, the customer transitioned to RKB as its main supplier, ending a long-standing monopoly by a major competitor.

### Support that goes beyond the product

RKB's value in Türkiye extends well beyond manufacturing. The team provides full technical assistance, including bearing selection, calculation, installation guidance, and training. Engineers from the Technical Team Unit work directly with maintenance crews when needed, ensuring practical, on-site guidance. In addition, RKB maintains a strategic stock in Istanbul to enable just-in-time delivery and flexible supply agreements. This has helped clients manage downtime risk and operate more efficiently, especially in industries where time-sensitive maintenance is a constant concern.

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RKB's 15-year journey in Türkiye reflects a steady, grounded approach, built on technical expertise, local presence, and responsiveness to real industrial needs. The focus remains the same as in 2010: supporting demanding applications with reliable products and dependable service. As Türkiye continues to strengthen its industrial base, RKB is positioned to grow with it, not through short-term tactics, but through long-term commitment and technical strength.