

Opening Remarks by Nail Olpak, President of DEİK on the occasion of the 14th Joint Annual Conference between Turkey and Canada

10 October 2017 – İstanbul

**Mayor Minnan-Wong;
Ambassador Cooter, Consul-General Shannon;
Chairs and Representatives of Bilateral Business Councils;
Distinguished Members of Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

On behalf of DEİK, I welcome you all to the Opening Session of the 14th Annual Conference between Turkey and Canada.

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to Business Councils on both sides, in bringing all of us here today.

This is a welcome speech and also my first official speech after taking over the Chair of DEİK, from my close friend Ömer Cihad Vardan. By the way, I'd like to thank to him for all his efforts during last three years.

So, I'm not going to speak about Bilateral trade volumes and such details, since that will be perfectly done, by other speakers.

Instead, I'll try to express some of my feelings.

I'm a mechanical engineer. My professor at the university had told us something 40 years ago which I want to start with. This fact also shows that, I'm getting older.

He'd told us that, in 1950's, they were asking the machine designers, if the products were robust enough or not.

Then, the question of compatibility came in.

Later, people were asking about aesthetic details.

It went on, like that.

Nowadays, as well as other things, we've been speaking about sustainability.

This year marks 150th anniversary of Canada; as well as the 15th year of the bilateral Business Councils among our nations. This shows that, sustainability seems, so far granted.

But, to able to continue on that, we, Turkish side, expect something more.

Very recently, Canada and the EU has signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

The agreement will remove 98% of tariffs, and expected to bring a trade increase, worth to some 11 billion Euros per year. An exited level for both parties.

On the other hand, Turkey and the EU are linked by the Customs Union since 1996, however, under the current design of the Customs Union, Turkey is not permitted a seat at EU negotiations with third parties, like CETA.

This, would not necessarily be problematic, if, Turkey was able to obtain the same agreement from parties; but parallel agreements with Turkey, have not been concluded.

Therefore, as DEİK, we Turkish Part, strongly believe, a potential FTA, between Turkey and Canada, will strengthen our economic ties.

So, we kindly ask, our Canadian friends, to accelerate this process. Where, I believe, we have a strong power, to push that.

If you ask, which power I mean?

Here's the answer.

From our point of view, I mean, for people outside Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors deal with, high level political and very critical issues. Here, my special thanks goes to Ambassador Cooter, for being with us here today.

Consul Generals deal with visa issues and other things. I'd like to thank to Mr. Shannon as well, who acts as if he is a businessman, someone from us, even catching a small signal from a tweet message of mine, turning it to practice.

And there are Commercial Consulars dealing with the business people, wh we believe, we are the most important group for country's relations. I salute them, for all of their efforts in deepening our ties with the world.

Finally, the main actors, business people is here.

If we have all the parties ready here, this is our power. Let's use it.

I would like to thank you once again for being with us today and wish that this year's Annual Conference would serve to our goals.

Thank you.

Nail OLPK
President of DEİK