

Finlandiya-Türkiye İş Forumu / 6 Nisan 2016, Helsinki

Ömer Cihad Vardan – DEİK Başkanı

Prime Minister of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu;

Prime Minister of Finland, H.E. Mr. Juha Sipilä;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey-DEİK, I would like to welcome you all to Finland-Turkey CEO Forum.

Your Excellency;

Distinguished Finnish Guests;

DEİK established in 1986, is Turkey's foremost institution entitled to shape our country's trade relations.

With its 131 Business Councils, of which 124 of them are country-based, DEİK works to improve Turkey's trade relations in a strategic manner.

Turkey-Finland Business Council is one among 131 Business Councils we have.

Of course we value all our Business Councils equally regardless of their potential; but Finland has a special status for us.

Having the world's most admired education system;

Being the biggest contributor to global innovation;

Finland is the country that has played a significant role in Turkey's EU membership process.

The city of Helsinki remains associated in Turkish and European's collective memory by the granting of candidate status to Turkey in 1999.

Last year, we left behind 10 years on Turkey's EU accession talks.

With 15 chapters out of 33 being opened to negotiations;

Only 1 being provisionnaly closed;

And several chapters being blocked by some EU Member States,

Turkey's EU aspirations have not yet been realized.

In fact reality does not hide the facts...

Turkey and the EU;

- partners for over 50 years, a half-century.
- tied to each other not only in terms of trade; but also socially, culturally and politically.
- partners to all crisis, problems and troubles that Europe faces today from finance to migration.

Let's think about the recent migration crisis;

The recent migration crisis clearly showed the **impossibility** to find a sloution to European problems without Turkey.

His Excellencies;

Distinguished Guests;

While Turkey's EU has not been finalized yet; today we have an important window of opportunity to act on integration.

Number one; we need to use wisely and effectively the recent spin on Turkey's EU relations caused by the migration crisis.

Number two; we need to turn into reality visa-free travel for Turkish nationals to Europe.

Last but not the least; by updating and revising 20-years-old Turkey-EU Customs Union, we need to revitalize our bilateral trade relations.

In short, we need to crown this long process with Turkey's full membership to the European Union.

At this point, we have alot to expect from Finland.

Cause Finland has been one of the most vocal and strong supporters of Turkey's EU membership.

Additionally, the most active years on Turkey's EU accession talks marked by Mr. Olli Rehn, who was then the Commissioner for Enlargement at the European Commission, in Brussels.

And today is the Minister in charge of Economic Affairs.

This is a big motivation; a wonderful opportunity for us to look at the future.

Distinguished Guests;

While working towards the goal of Turkey's membership to the EU, we also have to work to reveal the potential on our bilateral relations.

We strongly need to cooperate more to discover the potential; we need to establish more partnerships; encourage our business people and create new opportunities.

To this end, in cooperation with FinPRO we have organized Forums in Ankara and Istanbul; and we will continue to do so.

Your Excellencies;

Before I conclude, let me extend my thanks to both Prime Ministers;

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu

and Finnish Prime Minister Mr. Juha Sipilä;

for participating our Forum.

I also would like to thank to all business people from Turkey and Finland around the table.

I wholeheartedly wish that our Forum works as a catalyst on relation between Turkey and Finland.