



DEİK BAŐKANI ÖMER CİHAD VARDAN

KANADA YATIRIM KONFERANSI KONUŐMA METNİ

**ADDRESS BY ÖMER CİHAD VARDAN - CHAIRMAN OF DEİK
AT TURKİSH-CANADIAN BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE**

His Excellency; the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science of Ontario,

Mr. Chairman;

Members of Turkish and Canadian Business Communities;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey - DEİK, I am delighted to welcome you all to the lunch organized at the Turkish-Canadian Business and Investment Conference.

And, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to both sides of Turkish and Canadian Business World in bringing all of us here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

1984... 32 years ago...

I came to the USA for my Master's Degree. I was at OSU and visited Niagara Falls when I was studying there.

Then in 1985. This time I visited here with my parents for the first time.

When I first stepped in Canada, I enjoyed a lot driving with traffic signs showing kilometers instead of miles. That was a great surprise for me, as I had to deal with miles for a year back in the US.

Together with my parents we visited Niagara Falls, from Canadian side and traveled up to Ottawa and Montreal. That was my first 'Canadian' experience.

But surely not the last one!

How?

In early 1991, I started to represent a company called Roberts-Gordon, with premises both in Buffalo and Grimsby, Ontario.

At this very right place!

It has been more than 25 years; I have been working with this company.



A very good and vivid sample of Turkish-Canadian and American partnership extending to a quarter century.

Hopefully; I will visit them in Buffalo, right after this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

My experience as a 'businessman' clearly shows a very simple fact:

Despite the geographical distance between our nations, Turkey and Canada have been drawn together by geopolitical forces and commitments to common values.

Strong allies at NATO and G20, our nations offer generous potential on bilateral trade and business relations.

I have to admit;

We are not happy with the volume of bilateral trade and investment between our nations.

We clearly see the figures not reflecting the real potential.

Therefore, as DEİK, Turkey's foremost business organization on our country's foreign economic relations, we attach great value to this year's Conference and, we are passionate about what our country can offer to Canadian companies, especially in a time when global politics and global competitive race has never been faster.

Distinguished Guests;

Here I would like to underline one point which you may already know:

We have a time-zone where you can trade with one half of the globe in the morning and the other half in the afternoon.

We have one of the easiest accesses to the European market with around 750 million consumers generating tremendous economic activity.

90% of our exports are of industrial products; and almost half's destination is Europe; meaning quality of our products is what Europe looks for.

No need to say that we have a young, energetic, high-skilled human capital and a vibrant society to live in.

Therefore my message today is very simple:

Turkey is open for business. For sure....

Our country is committed to support global growth with open trade between our nations.

So invest in Turkey. Partner with Turkey.



Distinguished Guests;

Let me highlight a last point;

Very recently Canada and the EU has signed the long-delayed 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.

As you all know, Turkey and the EU are linked by a Customs Union since the beginning of 1996 and as I said, the EU is Turkey's #1 import and export partner.

However, under the current design of the Customs Union, Turkey is not permitted a seat at EU negotiations with third parties, like TTIP or CETA.

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

Therefore the cost of these 'grand agreements' to Turkey will be so high and Turkish economy will be tremendously affected.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In a time when global trade rules are changing quickly and sharply, governments need to think and act 'strategically'.

That's why our Government took necessary steps to update and revise 20-years old Customs Union.

So far, all seem to go well and the official negotiations expected to start on early 2017. This will surely enhance positively Turkey's foreign economic relations.

However; while governments act 'strategically', we, as the business communities also have to think and act the same way.

Therefore, as DEİK, we strongly believe a potential FTA between our nations will strengthen our economic ties.

And, we kindly ask our Canadian friends to accelerate this process.

As we all know, the recent change of the President in the USA would affect the Worlds' trade and investment climate. Therefore, we all need to take necessary steps to avoid any unexpected incidents.



Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;

In closing, I would like to thank you once again for being with us today and wish that the Conference would serve your goals.

Do enjoy the program.