

Türkiye-Slovakia Roundtable Meeting

20 January 2025, Ankara

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Denisa Saková,

Minister of Trade Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat,

Deputy Minister Mustafa Tuzcu,

Ambassador Erkan Özoral,

DEİK/Türkiye Slovakia Business Council Chairp Harika Güral,

Director General of SARIO, Robert Šimončič,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greet you all on behalf of Foreign Economic Relations Board-DEİK and grateful to be together with our Slovakian friends.

Türkiye was one of the first countries to recognize Slovakia, and our relations are progressing well in many areas. I'm pleased to be together 10 Slovak and 18 Turkish business representatives and hope this roundtable meeting will be fruitful to improve our economic relations with today's networking session.

Foreign Economic Relations Board, DEİK, is a business platform that has been continuing its activities for 40 years in order to enhance

bilateral economic relations between Türkiye and other countries. We continue our works with an understanding of “Business Diplomacy” together with our 152 country based and sectoral business councils all over the world.

Our Türkiye-Slovakia Business Council is one of these. Founded in 1995, it carries out its activities in collaboration with Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Turkish side is chaired by Ms. Harika Güral.

(Bilateral trade volume between us is around \$3 billion. Turkish investments in Slovakia is \$12 million and Slovak investments in Türkiye is \$32 million which is quite small.)

Our goal is to increase trade and mutual investments in both sides in a balanced way. Here the main responsibility belongs to business representatives where we will more act on the site while our ministers will continue to pave the way for us.

Let me underline few points, which will help to develop our cooperation:

- First of all, I kindly ask Slovakia side to support modernizing Customs Union Agreement in line with green and digital transformation. I believe a new and modern custom union agreement will also increase our bilateral trade and investment relations.
- Türkiye's position as a bridge between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, with its dynamic business environment, young and skilled workforce, and strong infrastructure networks offer great advantages to all as well as Slovak business world.

- Our country, which is the largest investment, manufacturing, and technology hub between Western Europe and China, has a foreign trade volume exceeding \$600 billion. We are 11th largest economy in the World and we have significant investment opportunities in almost every field, from energy and industry to agriculture and infrastructure investments. I invite the business community of Slovakia to invest in our country to take better advantage of these opportunities.
- We're also increasing our exports in service sectors. Tourism is the leading sector and in addition to that we diversified our service sector including education, health, logistics and digital.
- I believe collaboration between us can be established within the framework of climate change and the European Green Deal.
- As green and digital transformation go hand in hand, I believe digital transformation is another specific area in which we can cooperate more through DEİK's Digital Technologies Business Council.
- Health tourism is also an important agenda for us, and Slovakia is one of our main target countries.
- We should also increase our bilateral investments and joint investments in third countries.
- Finally, in today's world, where networking is crucial, I would like to express that we are always ready to share DEİK's global network, established through our 152 Business Councils, for the benefit of our Slovak friends as well.

I would like to finish my speech with a Slovak saying, “**Trpezlivosť ruőe prináŐa.**” (*Dıpezlivosť druje prinaŐa*). It means, “**Patience brings roses**”.

I believe, as Turkish and Slovak business representatives, we will take our rewards by working more to enhance our economic and investment relations with our patience and faith.

I’d like to extend my gratitude to Ministers, all participants, our sponsor Gural Porselen as well as to all who made this event possible.

Thank you.

Nail OLPAK

President of DEİK

Moderation Part

Thank you Ms. Chairperson.

Now I would like to give the floor to our private sector representatives Considering time limit, I’ll ask as the moderator not to exceed 2 minutes.

Private Sector Representatives

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Thank you for your remarks.

Now, I'll give the floor to Deputy Prime Minister for closing remarks.

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Thank you so much Minister.

Now, I'd like to give the floor to Our Minister Bolat.

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Thank you Minister.

I'd like to extend my gratitude to esteemed Ministers, all participants, as well as to all who made this event possible.

Nail OLPAK

President of DEİK