

## Turkey-Bahrain Interconnected Business

24 June 2020, 10.00

**Chairman of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. Sameer Abdulla Nass,**

**Chairperson of Turkey-Bahrain Business Council Mrs. Bilgün Gürkan,**

**Deputy CEO, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr. Abdulla Bader Al Sada,**

**Dear Participants,**

Firstly, I wish a healthy day to all of us.

انا اليوم معكم بوجودي سعيد انا (Ana saïd bi wujudi maakum al yawm)<sup>1</sup>

And I'm very glad to be with you in the organization of our new online meeting series called "Interconnected Business Series". Our aim is to gather our Business Councils and our cooperation for business & investment opportunities and sectoral business meetings.

And thanks in particular to our trade partner; Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) to be here with us and efforts to improve our cooperation so far.

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<sup>1</sup> I'm happy to be with you today.

My colleagues told me that, this is the first online meeting of the BCCI. I believe that, we will hold many meetings in this series with you. It seems BCCI has been a pioneer in this among GCC countries, and we wish that this cooperation leads to more fruitful cooperation in our region.

Allow me to begin by briefly introducing DEİK.

Foreign Economic Relations Board, DEİK, is a business platform that has been continuing its activities on a voluntary based private sector membership for 35 years. In order to enhance investment and trade, between Turkey and the other countries, we continue our works with an understanding of “**business diplomacy**”. We have 146 country to country based business councils all over the World. Our Turkey-Bahrain Business Council is one of them.

Our Turkey - Bahrain Business Council was founded in 2006 carrying on its activities and today is acting under the leadership of Bilgün Gürkan in order to increase trade and investment between our countries. Furthermore, our Business Council continues its activities in cooperation with important business and trade partners such as Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The fact that the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) is among our members, creates opportunities for the promotion of investment and business opportunities in Bahrain at DEİK.

As for what did we do in the pandemic process?

As DEİK, during this pandemic, we had an understanding of saying “**we are not suspending our work, we’re not shutting down**”. Of course, our health is the most important thing in our life and this is our

priority so we should take all necessary steps to prevent the pandemic, but we should also consider the health of our companies as well as care of the people we're working together with us and I believe, this was the best method to save their lives and jobs.

What have we done so far and why we did it and what is the result?

Daily, I spend 8 to 10 hours on average for video conferences and meetings... That goes on with our business council members, with ambassadors and trade missions and time to time with our Ministers. We have been actually working harder than ever. Yesterday, the last video conference ended at 00:10 by midnight and I'm here again with you.

## Dear Business Colleagues,

الحياة ملح الصديق (Al Sadiq milh u al haya)<sup>2</sup> This Arabic proverb explains how deep and important our friendship as Turkish and Bahraini nations.

Friendly relations between Turkey and Bahrain developed based on mutual respect and sincere ties for many years. Our cordial friendship has also positively affected our economic relations.

King of Bahrain, His Majesty Hamad Bin Isa El Khalifa visited Turkey at the opening ceremony of the third Bosphorus Bridge and our president Mr. Erdoğan visited Bahrain in previous years.

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<sup>2</sup> Friend is the salt of life.

There are important investments between the two countries. For example, Investcorp (a private equity fund based in Bahrain) has investments made to Turkish companies in Turkey.

However, we are far from our trade volume target with Bahrain. We should improve our economic relations more. As the Turkish Business World, we should also strive to diversify the investments in Bahrain, especially with the members of BCC & I.

Now, I would like to express some points which may help to develop our bilateral relations with Bahrain:

- First of all, ensuring the visa liberalization between Turkey and Bahrain is very crucial to improve our mutual economic relations. It'll be useful for our Turkish investors who want to invest in Bahrain.
- We should develop our cooperations in these specific sectors:
  - Health tourism, (As Turkey and Bahrain, we're leading countries in the health tourism.)
  - Health, (We're ready to export the products of the mask, respirator and so on in the pandemic process.)
  - E-commerce,
  - Consultancy,
  - Education sector, (We can do networking and case study presentations on that sector together.)

- Technology, (Our technology companies can evaluate Bahrain for that area as well as Dubai)
- Agriculture. (Bahrain can benefit from Turkey's experience in this field.)
- Construction products, (As Turkish business world, we can supply construction products to Bahraini business people)
- Eco-friendly technologies and clean energy,
- Fields such as aluminum, petro-chemistry, iron-steel,
- Cooperation within third countries such as Asia or Africa,

## **Dear Business Colleagues,**

During the Covid-19 process, Bahrain brings under control of the situation by taking quick actions. I believe that, we will survive this situation with minimal damage. I also believe that, the one who guaranteed the supply chain and got the confidence of its counterpart during this pandemic, will certainly be the winner.

Thank you again for joining us and thank you to our audience today.

**Nail OLPAK**

**President of DEİK**