

**Business Breakfast with Mayor and Governor of Vienna Mr.  
Michael Ludwig**

**11 June 2022, İstanbul**

**Mayor and Governor of Vienna Mr. Michael (*Mihael*) Ludwig,  
Chair of Türkiye-Austria Business Council Mr. Burak Bilge,  
Parliament Member Ms. Aslıhan Bozatemur,**

**Dear Guests,**

On behalf of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Türkiye - DEİK, I am delighted to be with you in this meaningful meeting in Istanbul.

It is an honor for me to be with Mayor and Governor of Vienna Mr. Michael Ludwig today. I hope we are going to take important steps for our economic relations in this beautiful atmosphere.

Let me start with a brief introduction of DEİK.

Foreign Economic Relations Board, DEİK, is a business platform that has been continuing its activities for 37 years in order to enhance all economic relations, between Türkiye and the other countries. We continue our activities with an understanding of “business diplomacy”.

As part of this “business diplomacy” perspective, I firmly believe that today is a good chance to consider our bilateral economic relations of the two friend countries.

There are 149 Business Councils in DEİK, 140 of those are country based Business Councils. We have a strong structure of Business Councils in the world; 45 in Africa, 37 in Europe, 19 in Asia-Pacific, 13 in the Middle East, 13 in Eurasia and 15 in the Americas.

I mean, it is a unique business platform with such a large network. I hope that the Austrian business world will also benefit from this network.

Our Türkiye-Austria Business Council is one of our important business councils in Europe. It has been founded in 1996 and carrying on its activities with the Counterpart Organization of Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (WKÖ) (*Virtşafstskame Österayh*), Austrian-Turkish Business Cooperation Council with the leadership of Burak Bilge.

We mainly focus on energy, infrastructure projects, transport equipment, machine building, environmental technologies, finance, digitalization, smart cities and start-ups with our business council.

2021 was a year in which we achieved historic successes in the field of start-up ecosystems and technology funding in Türkiye. The total number of transactions, which was 155 in 2020, when the interest in the start-up ecosystem increased as a result of the effect of the pandemic that triggered the digital transformation, increased to 251 in 2021. On the other hand, the total funding value increased 10 times compared to the previous year, reaching a peak value of \$1.55 billion. This made our country leave

many European countries behind and become one of the top 10 countries in Europe and fetch 2nd place in the Middle East and North Africa region in technology-based start-up funding.

In this direction, we aim to be a platform in the field of technology and digitalization through our new Business Council that we established to adapt to digitalization. For this reason, we established our new Business Council named “Digital Technologies”.

Just as digitalisation concept, green deal is also on our agenda.

Through an approach we may consider as “Green Life”, our objective of “**Zero Carbon in 2053**” set for the Turkish business world shall serve as a critical step in the motivation of our enterprises.

The “European Green Deal” of the EU is a new economy model so, it includes certain risks. While current barriers are available such as problems of our country not being included within the resolutions related to the FTAs concluded by the EU, visa and motorway quotas, in case of occurrence of any preclusion related to such, serious adverse affects shall be imposed on us. EU accession process, **modernization of Customs Union** and expansion of scope have become further urgent. Therefore, we are bringing forward on every platform the fact that this update is an achievement for the EU as much as for Türkiye. We have already submitted the reports we have drawn up regarding the matter before the EU Commission and the entire relevant parties.

Last but not least, we are aware of the potential for “smart cities” between our countries. I know this topic is at the top of your agenda and I

am convinced that Türkiye-Austria Business Council will continue its activities on this important topic. In fact, the Business Council has made some initiatives to realize a mutual project just before the pandemic. We assess your strategy to make Vienna known as a global pioneer when it comes to Smart City issues. I firmly believe that innovation, digitalization, green transformation and smart city issue all go hand in hand to achieve a better and more sustainable future and we should work together.

Türkiye is on her path to fully adapt to smart city understanding of governance. Türkiye is the 4th country that declared the 2020 – 2023 National Smart Cities Strategy and Action Plan.

### **Honorable Mayor, Dear Guests,**

Considering the last five years of our economic relations, we observe a stable trend where trade volume between our countries is around 3.3 billion \$. Also, there are 972 companies that are Austrian owned or in partnership with Austrian companies.

According to ITC data, Austria has a potential to increase its exports to Türkiye by 2.2 billion \$ and Türkiye has a potential to increase its exports to Austria by 1.3 billion \$ so it is visible that the potentials for both countries is high.

We believe maintaining a regular dialogue to increase these numbers and to create reliable and sustainable partnerships is crucial.

Here the main part of the responsibility belongs to business representatives. We should increase mutual investments and further develop our cooperation with Austria. With this motivation, we should work harder.

There are some points, we should mention here.

- Türkiye needs to take part in the discussion of Europe's high priority issues like youth unemployment, migration, climate change, the digital revolution, consumer rights and the roadmap to a sustainable future...
- As the Turkish business representatives, we strongly support the establishment of joint initiatives or platforms to contribute to the dissemination of in-depth, accurate knowledge that leads to a more balanced perception of Türkiye among key opinion leaders and the public.

I would like to finish my speech with an Austrian saying, "**Success has more than one father.**".

As representatives of our communities, I hope we can lead by successful examples and bring Turkish-Austrian cooperation to the next stage.

Thank you for your attention.

**Nail OLPAK**

**President of DEİK**