

## DTIK-EU Friendship Piano Concert

3 December 2020, 18.00

**Honorable Founding Chair of EU-Turkey Friendship Group Mr. Ryszard Czarnecki (*Riřard arnetski*),**

**Today's Honorable Guest Turan Manafzade,**

**Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Attendees,**

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the special friendship concert that EU-Turkey Friendship Group and The World Turkish Business Council - DTIK jointly organized. It is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to welcome you together with Mr. Ryszard Czarnecki (*Riřird arnetski*), founding chairman of the EU-Turkey Friendship Group. Also I would like to acknowledge contribution of European Parliament for opening up its platform for today's concert, which is a development that has happened after a long interval. My special appreciation goes to the star of our event, exceptionally talented young pianist Ms. Turan Manafzade.

And today is 3rd December-International, Day of Persons with Disabilities. So, I wish for a world without barriers and more social awareness about that.

I would like to continue by wishing you healthy and safe days. We are in an extraordinary period, under limiting conditions dictated on us by the COVID pandemic. However, I am proud to note that despite challenging conditions, we did not give up or surrender. Although the pandemic locks all of us to homes, we have adapted ourselves digitally and did not cut our communication. This virtual concert is one of the examples of our resolve.

The World Turkish Business Council is a diaspora organization which aims to bring together the Turkish diaspora members disregarding their differences including political views or social status. Our motto is "business diplomacy", and we primarily focus on increasing and strengthening the economic relations between Turkish business people and the Friends of Turkey. In this regard we have two main priorities; On the one hand, we intend to facilitate networking and trade among diaspora Turks in a safe environment. On the other hand, we aim to strengthen the worldwide communication of Turkish society living abroad. These Turks, which are integrated into the system of the country they live in, can in turn benefit their homeland.

The fact that powerful Turkish and Azerbaijani diaspora is spread all over the world is an important advantage for us. Our both countries are one of the exceptional countries that support their diaspora. The fact that our President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was with us in our previous DTİK meeting in Azerbaijan, just before Covid-19, is a clear indication of this argument. I present my gratitude to him and my respect to the ex-president of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev who described as "one nation with two states" by due to both being Turkic countries and having strong cultural, historical and ethnic ties.

Our diaspora power is an important gain for our ultimate goal which is to enhance our ties with the countries where our diaspora members live. This applies to Turkey's relations with Europe. Turkey has centuries long relationship with Europe, it is a part of European continent and approximately 5 million Turks live in Europe. They are great assets for improved friendship bonds. Turkey envisions establishing its future together with Europe. Also, in the new world order immigration is considered as the wealth of nations spread all around the world. In this tough period of pandemic, who can deny heavenly and unique efforts of Turkish – German science people Uğur Şahin and Özlem Türeci, co-founders of the BioNtech, who work for the Covid vaccine. We are proud of them and many other who are integrated to the country where they live and never forget their motherland. Those kinds of success stories can be increased with mutual understanding and tolerance.

Today we gathered here to enjoy a concert. Music is an extremely important factor bringing people together no matter what their country, language, religion or race is. It is a fantastic opportunity to build ties. I wish, I could play an instrument personally but unfortunately it seems it's out of my capability. There are innumerable examples in the history of the world that musicians played a role of "peace envoys.". Music is the soft power of friendship and peace. And gathering under the tutelary of European Parliament shows us how important is the constructive role of Europe. Therefore, I am so glad and feel lucky to cooperate with Mr. Czarnecki (*Çirnetski*).

2020 will definitely be a year to remember. No matter what, I hope and believe that a spirit of peace, friendship and solidarity will prevail and bring us all closer, as we exert efforts to come out of these difficult times

together. We try many ways to achieve this. On the one hand we work very hard to maintain and improve trade and business relations and on the other, with cultural events like today, we remember the superior merits of being human.

I am inviting you all to the concert of Turan Manafzade, who is an incredibly talented pianist and conductor from Azerbaijan. She is a winner of many prizes at international music competitions and she was named Honored Artist of Azerbaijan.

Thank you for joining us. Enjoy the concert, enjoy the notes of music.

**Nail OLPAK**

**President of DEİK & DTİK**