

Türkiye-Bulgaria Business Roundtable Meeting

20 November 2025, DEİK, 11.00

Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria H.E. Tomislav Donchev,

Deputy Minister of Innovation and Growth Krasimir Yakimov,

DEİK/Türkiye-Bulgaria Business Council Chair M. Zeki Sarıbekir,

Distinguished Representatives of Public and Business Sectors,

I greet you all on behalf of Foreign Economic Relations Board-DEİK and grateful to be welcome you at our headquarters.

Let me start with a Bulgarian saying, if I can pronounce well:

К а п к а п о к а п к а — в и р с т а в а. (***Kapka po kapka — vir stava***). That means, “**Drop by drop, a pond forms**”. We have the same saying.

That’s true. Small consistent efforts lead to big achievements. I believe, As business people, we are steadily moving forward to enhance our trade and investment relations.

Let me continue about our DEİK family, Foreign Economic Relations Board, which is a business organization that has been continuing its activities for 40 years in order to enhance bilateral economic relations

between Türkiye and other countries. We continue our efforts with an understanding of “Business Diplomacy”, operated on a voluntary membership basis without using public funds. And we carry out our activities with our 153 country-based and sectoral business councils all over the world.

DEİK/Türkiye-Bulgaria Business Council is one of them. It was founded in 1991 and, carrying on its activities with Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, under the chair of M. Zeki Sarıbekir and Tsvetan Simeonov.

Türkiye is currently Bulgaria’s third-largest trading partner, following Germany and Romania. Bilateral trade volume between us is close to \$8 billion. Investment relations between Türkiye and Bulgaria represent another strong area of cooperation. Although bilateral investment flows fluctuated in recent years, they generally maintained an upward trend. Our target is to increase trade volume and mutual investments in a balanced way and exceed \$10 billion trade volume.

So let me underline a few points, which I believe will help to develop our cooperation;

- In addition to the strong existing areas such as energy, metal ores, and copper materials, there is significant potential to increase trade volume through joint projects in renewable energy, agriculture and high value added technologies.
- Türkiye and Bulgaria serve as important near-shoring hubs for each other, offering strategic production and logistics advantages. Thanks

to our geographical proximity, near-shoring represents a key opportunity that brings our economies even closer.

- Road-based commercial transportation between Türkiye and Bulgaria operates at a highly intensive level. However, delays at border gates remain a major factor that adversely affects trade efficiency. Therefore, the modernization of border crossings, particularly Kapıkule/Kapitan Andreevo, implementation of digital transit systems, and acceleration of customs procedures constitute essential steps to ensure a more effective commercial flow.
- In alignment with Bulgaria's prioritization of energy supply security and Türkiye's ambition to become regional energy hub, investing in joint energy projects is both feasible and beneficial. Expanding natural gas distribution networks, supporting renewable energy investments, and strengthening energy-efficiency initiatives would all represent important steps toward closer cooperation in this field.
- Türkiye's extensive experience in transportation and infrastructure is highly aligned with Bulgaria's needs. We can work together particularly in hotel and residential construction and infrastructure development,
- Trade in services gained momentum at global scale in recent years and Türkiye did significant achievements in this sector. In addition to our traditional tourism sector, we also increased our capacity in health and education. More than 5.600 Bulgarian students are enrolled in Turkish universities, and our hospitals are accepting international patients. We can collaborate more on these sectors as well.

- When it comes to our country, which is the largest investment, manufacturing, and technology hub between Western Europe and China, has a foreign trade volume exceeding \$800 billion. We have significant investment opportunities in almost every sector, from energy to industry, agriculture to infrastructure and to information economics. I invite the Bulgarian business community to invest in our country and take advantage of our investment opportunities especially in high technology sectors.

This Monday, we addressed the importance of Türkiye-EU relation issues in Brussels, with participation of more than 400 business and official representatives at EU-Türkiye Business Summit. As a business diplomacy organization, we work on the most effective platforms to discuss and elaborate how we can elevate our cooperation with our European friends. Next year, we will organize the second session of the Summit and would like to have Bulgarian delegation to join us for more opportunities.

Thank you for listening. I would like to give the floor to Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria H.E. Tomislav Donchev for his remarks.

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Thank you H.E.

And now, I would like to give the floor to Deputy Minister of Innovation and Growth of Bulgaria Krasimir Yakimov for his presentation.

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Thank you so much.

Now, I'll give the floor to private sector representatives to share their views on bilateral relations and their sectors. I have 12 names here in my list, considering we should finish at 12.00 p.m, I'll ask as the moderator not to exceed time limit.

Private Sector Representatives

- Sevgür Arslanpay, General Manager of Sarkuysan,
 - Mehmet Emrah Sazak, Board Member of Alcomet AD,
 - Halil Demirdağ, Chairperson of Smart Solar Technologies,
 - Lale Cander, Chairperson of DEİK/Türkiye-Italy BC and Pirelli Türkiye,
 - Soner Biber, Vice President of TÜMSİAD,
6. Fahrettin Oylum, Deputy Chair of DEİK/Digital Technologies Business Council
- Ersin Şen, General Manager of Hermes Consulting,
 - Deniz Yumer, Factory Manager of Aksan Industry,
 - Ferhat Dörtköşe, Owner of Fertek Machinery,
 - Hüseyin Güler, Director of Hayat Holding,
 - Cemal Kara, Director of Karacı Tours International,
 - Songül Kara, Overseas Branches Banking Manager of Ziraat Bank

Thank you all for your introductions.

Nail OLPAK

President of DEİK