

## **Türkiye-Kosovo Business Forum**

**3 June 2024, DEİK Headquarters**

**Prime Minister of Kosovo Mr. Albin Kurti,**

**Our Trade Minister Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat,**

**Minister of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade of Kosovo Ms.  
Rozeta Hajdari,**

**Chief of Staff to the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo Mr.  
Luan Dalipi,**

**DEİK/Türkiye-Kosovo Business Council Chairperson Mr.  
Batuhan Özdemir,**

**Dear Turkish and Kosovan Private Sector Representatives,**

I greet you all on behalf of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK). And I am happy to be with our Kosovan friends for the business forum in our DEİK headquarters.

I believe this meeting is not just a meeting to discuss trade and investment but also, a celebration of the existing mutual relations between our countries.

As business people from Türkiye, Kosovo, and the Balkan region who love each other and have strong bonds; our main goal is to establish

collaborations through the power of our knowledge and experience, with the support of our friendship and warm relationships.

Türkiye is one of the few countries which recognized the independence of Kosova in 2008. Since then, we have always supported and appreciated the progress made in establishing the legal infrastructure, transition to a market economy and maintaining macroeconomic stability in Kosovo. As Türkiye we also emphasized increasing economic relations between the two countries. To this end, we established the Joint Economic Commission Mechanism in 2013 and in 2019 we signed a Free Trade Agreement with Kosovo, which is the first FTA that Kosovo signed.

Our total investments between 2007-2022 reached 430 million €. With that figure, we are the 6<sup>th</sup> country that has the most FDI in Kosovo. Our contractors also underlined the 1.5 billion € worth of projects in Kosovo and Turkish companies employ almost 10.000 people in Kosovo. There are many important Turkish investments in Kosovo in various sectors such as education, manufacturing, banking, infrastructure, energy and healthcare. In the field of education, schools run by Turkish Maarif Foundation attract attention.

In the banking sector, many Turkish banks provide services through various branches in Kosovo and contribute to the financial structure of the country. Major investments in airport operation and electricity distribution stand out in infrastructure projects. In the energy sector, wind energy projects and solar energy investments for sustainable production in industry attract attention. In the health sector, private hospitals and specialized medical centers increase the quality of health services in

Kosovo. These various investments highlight the strong economic ties between Türkiye and Kosovo.

The bilateral trade volume between Türkiye and Kosovo is around \$750 million. We made significant improvement to improve our economic relations within the last 15 years. We are all aware of the target to increase our trade and investment relations in a balanced way. Here the main responsibility belongs to all of us where business representatives 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;

- Our Turkish contractors and technical consultants have experience on a global scale. We would like them to participate in infrastructure renewal projects in Kosovo.
- Agriculture, industry, mining, tourism, services and energy are other areas of cooperation between the two countries.
- Especially renewable energy projects gain importance in recent years. Türkiye has a huge potential in renewable energy capacity, and I believe that both countries' business people can cooperate more and reap the benefits of this potential together.
- We support the EU membership of Kosovo, and we hope that you will join the Union very soon. As Türkiye, we are also a candidate member. But we have a custom union agreement with Europe and modernization of it in line with green and digital transformation and with the new rules and trends of international trade is our top priority.

I also look forward to your support in the modernization of the Customs Union.

- At the beginning, I have talked about Turkish Companies' investments in Kosovo. Let me also underline that Türkiye also provides significant investments opportunities and I ask Kosovan firms to benefit from them. As Türkiye we do not only have custom union agreement with Europe, but we also have FTAs with 28 countries and if you invest in Türkiye you can reach a population of more than 1 billion. Our economy has a diversified structure and there are almost 30 sectors that are exporting to more than 200 countries in the World. I also ask Kosovan firms to benefit from this diversified economy.
- Another important trend in the world economy is the increase in services trade. Türkiye also offers opportunities in the services sector. A significant number of foreign students are choosing Türkiye for their university education. There are more than 1000 Kosovan students that choose our universities for their higher education. I expect more students to benefit from our high education.
- One of our prominent services sectors is the health sector. I would like to remind our friends from Kosovo that the investments Turkey has made in the health sector for a long time have reached a level that is an example for many countries. This will be important in terms of our both support and investments in the health activities that can be done there, and I believe that our friends from Kosovo can also benefit from treatments through health tourism in Türkiye, if needed.

- As green and digital transformation go hand in hand, we believe digital transformation is another specific area in which we can cooperate more through DEİK's Digital Technologies Business Council.

Also, we need to solve some issues like,

- Difficulties our investors face, especially regarding compliance with legal deadlines in the practices of public institutions.
- Paying higher customs duties and VAT for Turkish-origin products.
- And, the Free Trade Agreement needs to include agricultural products.

I would like to finish my speech with a Kosovan saying, “**Pa mund, s'ka mrekulli**” (*Pa mund sa ka mekuul*). It means, “**Without effort, there are no miracles.**”

I believe, as Turkish and Kosovan business representatives, we will work more to enhance our economic and investment relations to have miracles.

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

Thank you.

**Nail OLPAK**

**President of DEİK**