



Canadian-Turkish Business Council
Conseil d'affaires Canada-Turquie
Kanada-Türkiye İş Konseyi

Presentation by Ron Denom, Chairman of Canadian Turkish Business Council.

Founding Members:

ABCO Engineering

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you all for coming out to participate in this program and thank you for your support the Council.

Inmet Mining Corp.

My work at SNC-Lavalin takes me to some 34 countries around Europe and Asia. Democracies, authoritarian regimes, market economies, centrally controlled economies and just about everything in between. From a purely business point of view, these differences are not that important, good business will always find a way to get done.

OZ Optics Ltd.

SNC-Lavalin

What is more important to me as I assess a business environment is the dominant attitudes and behaviors of the business people and government officials that I encounter – is there consensus? is there a sense of community?, does the government have legitimacy?, is it effective? is there political and macroeconomic stability? is there rule of law?

Partner Organizations in Canada:

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters

In my little homemade ranking system, Turkey has risen to top 5 – perhaps even top 3 in the countries that I deal with. I think that it can be fairly said that Turkey has achieved more reform in just over two years than in the whole of the previous decade. Here in North America, we hear very little about it but the political and legal system of the country has changed profoundly.

Export Development Canada

Progress has been made in streamlining public administration and government, in strengthening the role of parliament, promoting gender equality and upgrading religious rights and freedoms and bringing full parliamentary control over military expenditures. There has also been substantial improvement in domestic inter-ethnic relations.

Foreign Affairs Canada

International Trade Canada

Lately there has been a lot of speculation in the media about the accession of Turkey to the EU that really leaves me a little bit perplexed – particularly when it is presented as if it was a problem or source of uncertainty.

Canadian Trade Commissioner Service - In Turkey

Whereas it is true that Turkey has been on an exceptionally “long march”, I don’t think that there has ever been any doubt about where Turkey is going.

Ontario Export Inc.

Some people trace the roots of the relationship between Europe and Turkey all the way back to the 11th century when the Turks first entered Anatolia and gradually established the Ottoman Empire.

Saskatchewan Trade & Export Partnership

Some back to 1923 – still some eighty years ago – when Ataturk’s reforms laid the groundwork for the development of the modern secular state we see today.

Partner Organizations in Turkey:

Ataturk’s reforms included the abolition of the Sultanate, Caliphate and Ulema, the renunciation of Sharia law, the adoption of a new Civil Code modeled on that of Switzerland, the granting of political rights to women, the replacement of the Arabic by the Roman alphabet, the elimination of words of Arabian and Persian origin, the switch from the lunar to the solar calendar, and the substitution of Friday by Sunday as a day of rest.

Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK)

The Turkish-Canadian Business Council

Some people look back to August 1949 when The Council of Europe, guardian of European values and principles, admitted Turkey as full member. It judged that the Turkish Republic fulfilled its two conditions for membership – to be a European country and to respect human rights, pluralistic democracy and the rule of law.

Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges

Some people look back to 1951 Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and became a cornerstone of the Euro-Atlantic defence system.



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And so on...Turkey today is a full member of all major Europe-wide institutions, - the European Union being the sole exception. So does the prospect of Turkish accession to the EU create worry and uncertainty for business?

As a business person and part-time student of history - I really don't think so.

Let's go back to my little ranking system – in the past the principle weak point in Turkey has been political and macroeconomic stability.

Between the election of a majority government some two years ago, the drive to legislate real reforms using, as a guide, many parts of the EU l'acquis communautaire, and the last round of co-operation with the IMF, we are now seeing a sustained period of political and macroeconomic stability in Turkey.

Inflation is under control and growth this year has been tremendous – I hear numbers as high as 12-14% but oddly asymmetrical – export led - with domestic unemployment still a problem. Growth will probably slow next year but will still be far above any other EU country. And the government will have more financial room to manoeuvre and can begin to take advantage of pre-accession support from the EU.

I believe that it all adds up to next year being a big year for business and investment in Turkey.

And, our next speaker, and for that matter all of our distinguished speakers today - I'm sure that will have much more to say on this topic.

They say that Turkey lives in a tough neighborhood – and it produces intelligent, articulate and pragmatic diplomats. We have the pleasure of having one of the best with us today. Please join me in giving a warm welcome to - His Excellency - Mr. Aydemir Erman - Ambassador of Turkey to Canada