



**Speech by Muharrem YILMAZ
TÜSİAD President of the Board
Steering Committee Meeting
13 November 2013, Tel Aviv
(Prepared by Global Economic Relations Department)**

Dear President Oren, Dear Friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you today on behalf of TÜSİAD. First of all, I would like to thank you Mr. Zvi Oren and your colleagues at MAI for hosting us. I also would like to thank you for your commitment in improving our institutional and economic relations between our countries and for making this visit possible for us with your valuable support.

As you know, we came together this year in May in Istanbul and decided to set up a steering committee for handling joint working areas between our economies. Today, we are very pleased to be here all together with the distinguished and significant business delegations from both sides.

We believe that the first meeting of the Steering Committee will be a new milestone for deepening of both our institutional and bilateral economic relations. I am also very glad to see here Mr. Shraga Brosh, a great friend of Turkey and TÜSİAD, whom we worked for longtime in a cooperative way.

Let me begin with brief information about TÜSİAD.

TÜSİAD is one of the leading non-governmental and voluntary business organizations in Turkey. Our members and their companies realize

- Eighty per cent (85%) of Turkey's foreign trade excluding energy import,
- Sixty-five per cent (65%) of industrial production and
- Fifty per cent (50%) of the registered employees except agriculture and civil servants.

Through our representative offices based in Brussels, Paris, Berlin, Washington DC and Beijing, we actively follow the international agenda and share it with our members. As the voice of business in Turkey, we also represent Turkish business in G-20/B-20 activities.

Dear friends,

Without taking much of your time, I would like to mention few points on our bilateral economic relations. We have continuously increasing trade relations with Israel which is the first country with which we concluded a “Free Trade Agreement” in 1996 immediately after our Customs Union Agreement with the EU in the same year.

Since the conclusion of FTA with Israel, our bilateral trade relations considerably increased from 447 million USD in 1996 to 4 billion USD in 2012.

Our bilateral economic relations have continued to increase despite the tough times of the political atmosphere.

We know that Israel is a very strong knowledge-based economy, especially in R&D field. In addition to traditional industries and many other sectors, Turkey and Israel can cooperate in the sectors of technology, agriculture-food and energy which are selected as the fields having high cooperation potential by our institutions. We believe that the economies of Turkey and Israel are complementary in these areas.

Cooperation between Turkish and Israeli universities is another untapped opportunity, especially in terms of know-how exchange. For that purpose, we have invited Professor Mr. Miran, from Ege University, Faculty of Agriculture. In a few minutes, he will share with us of project proposals on his area with concrete next steps.

We are also willing to look for areas of cooperation at trilateral level “US-Turkey-Israel” through our partnerships with the US institutions; we should work more on that.

New energy-related developments in the mediterranean basin makes us believe that a new and huge field of cooperation is waiting for us there. As the business people, we should not miss this unique opportunity.

Dear friends,

Finally, I desire to underline the importance of keeping the communication channels open. Even in the most challenging days of our bilateral political relations, we always kept our vision to sustain bilateral business relations.

Our presence here in Tel Aviv today signifies our commitment to deepening, further improving and diversifying our bilateral partnership.

On behalf of TÜSIAD, I would like to thank you once again for your hospitality and friendship.