

Ambassador Landrut, Ambassador Vacek, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of TÜSİAD, I would like to sincerely thank Ambassador Landrut for his valuable support and interest in realizing this meeting. It is a unique occasion to convene EU ambassadors and diplomatic corps representatives with TÜSİAD member companies around the critical topic of digital transformation. We have a lot to discuss and learn from each other.

Your excellencies,

We are gathering here today against the backdrop of multiple crisis worldwide. Despite the fatigue and the longing for stability and predictability, the “permacrisis” became our new normal and stretches well beyond the geopolitical instability, war in Europe, cybersecurity and energy security, climate crisis, and the pandemic..

Through these challenging times, we need clear direction, lucid policies, as well as an innovative vision and political courage. BusinessEurope Council of Presidents from 40 member federations met in Stockholm last week to deliver our unified message to the upcoming EU Presidency and EU institutions. And the European business urge that we cannot act as if **business as usual**.

The geo-political rifts and geo-economic dynamics of our time requires Europe to respond simultaneously on multiple fronts and digitalisation and green transition are the central enablers.

Immense potential of digitalisation can feed into mitigating energy crisis and value chain resilience; advancing climate action, energy security including green technologies, digital and cyber resilience, opening new channels through digital rights and digital diplomacy – to name a few.

Europe needs a comprehensive approach, as demonstrated with the European Political Community initiative to maintain and promote rules-based global system; to overcome the “permacrisis” and to lead the transformation towards a new digitally transformative and sustainable development model in its region.

Partnering with the accession countries and close economic partners to achieve this ambitious goal would be the best and most natural approach.

This also applies to the EU-Turkey relations. We need to use every lever at our disposal **to preserve and deepen Turkey’s integration to the EU**. European agenda's transformative pillars present a new opportunity to engage with Turkey **on a concrete, rules-based manner**. On national level, we address the green transformation as a strategic priority. As to the **Digital Single Market integration, we are advocating for rapid and full alignment of the Turkish legislation on protection of personal data with the EU GDPR** as a priority.

Joint EU-Turkey technical work for Turkey's alignment with the EU acquis in key policy areas, including European Green Deal, Digital Single Market agenda, energy and food security, as well as security, remains essential, including in the short-term.

Customs Union modernization addressing sustainable development goals, especially in digital, green and social policies, would be the most comprehensive and effective way forward to overcome the challenges that we face. The leading representative organizations of European business community and digital industries call for the Customs Union modernization as a matter of priority. **BusinessEurope and DIGITALEUROPE** are primary examples.

Turkish private sector is following the sustainable development agenda of the EU, including the **regulatory work on the European Green Deal and Digital Single Market**, very closely. Our companies are at times aligning with the emerging EU rules and standards than what is legally required on national level and contributing to the formation of policies that would reinforce the integration of Turkey to the EU. Turkish business community calls all involved actors to engage in **constructive and structured work on the Turkey's integration to the EU Digital Single Market**. Reactivation of the dialogue on the alignment of Turkish legislation with the EU GDPR can be addressed as a priority.

Your Excellencies,

Over 50 years, TUSIAD's guiding principles and overarching goal have remained intact: a competitive and innovative market economy relies on a strong democracy and constitutional order based on rule of law. We have been addressing Turkey's integration process to the EU as one of the main elements of this goal. During the very same period, we have also naturally witnessed significant changes in both global dynamics and in the EU-Turkey relationship. In line, we have been engaging in continuous self-reflection to remain innovative and constructive in our policy proposals both on national and European levels, as the main representative organization of the Turkish business and member of BUSINESSEUROPE, B20 and Business at OECD.

It is our belief that EU-Turkey digital cooperation and Turkey's alignment with digital economy related standards and legislation will be indispensable for both the EU and Turkish business with highly integrated value chains. **We hope that our meeting with you will explore the avenues for collaboration on the bilateral (national) and EU level and are looking forward to hearing your remarks.**
