

**Speech by Gilles Rémy, President of the France-Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce**

**Vienna Forum**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Turkmen friends and partners,

I am happy today in Vienna to greet you as President of the France-Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce. Our Chamber represents all French companies working in Turkmenistan. Some have been present since independence, for over 25 years, and enjoy a unique experience of fruitful cooperation with their Turkmen counterparts: Bouygues in construction, Thales in air traffic control and space, CIFAL in consulting, financing, services and delivery of industrial equipment. Other French multinational corporations have joined us such as Airbus, Vinci, Safran, Total... The TCCA gathers many companies bringing their technologies and know-how in all sectors of Turkmenistan's rapidly developing economy: energy, industry, agriculture...

French business knows the role and importance of Turkmenistan in the economic development and stability of Central Asia and the Caspian region. We highly appreciate the active and visionary policy of President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov. Turkmenistan is not only the world's fourth largest gas reserves, it is also a dynamic and increasingly diversified economy. We are honored to take an active part in the enhancement of Turkmenistan's natural wealth, and to create value-added through technology transfer and investment attraction.

Turkmenistan is at the heart of the Great Silk Road. We have just published in French the remarkable book of the President of Turkmenistan on this topic. The stakes are high not only for Central Asia, but also for Europe. Turkmenistan has developed the best road, air, sea, and energy infrastructure in Central Asia, placing your country at the crossroads of the Silk Road. The Asia-Europe partnership through Turkmenistan is a channel of communication and exchange that will contribute to peace and prosperity of all our countries for decades to come.

For instance, the recent delimitation of the Caspian Sea, in which the President of Turkmenistan played a major role, paves the way for the construction of a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline. It will be a key element of the diversification of Europe's gas supply sources.

As already said, French companies have a rich, old and unique experience of cooperation with Turkmenistan. We perfectly measure the tremendous progress made by Turkmenistan in a short period of time. And we know that Turkmen needs are changing. Turkmen companies have acquired first-rate skills in a number of economic sectors. We

must promote Turkmen exports in all areas. The future of our business depends on a close cooperation with Turkmen organizations and both public and private companies. The quality of our partnership is essential for successful cooperation. No good partnership without mutual knowledge. No good partnership without trust coming from this mutual knowledge.

I would like to welcome the initiative of the Union of Entrepreneurs and Industrialists bringing us together today at the heart of Europe. The number of participants in this forum proves the interest in Turkmenistan and the importance of its partnership with Europe. This forum allows dozens of companies to meet, to get to know each other, to determine common projects they could develop together. That is the essence of business.

I would like to congratulate the President of the Entrepreneurs Union, my dear friend Aleksandr Dadayev. He has done so much to expand cooperation with new countries, with new businesses, and to attract foreign investments. I would like to congratulate also the organisers of this forum: Mrs. Berger for the Austrian-Turkmen society and Mr Gindl of Turope.

Your initiative is very precious. The Chamber of Commerce France-Turkmenistan is ready to take over and propose you to host in France your future European Forum. With this Vienna Forum, you have started a very positive dynamic. We are ready to strengthen it with you for the coming years.

I wish you all the greatest successes in your business between Turkmen companies and European companies.

Thank you for your attention.

Gilles Remy