

**Dear President of the Council of Higher Education,
Dear Rectors,
Dear Chairman,
Esteemed Members of our Assembly,
Distinguished Honorary Members of our Assembly,
Dear Guests
and Distinguished Members of the Press,**

I would like to greet you all with love and respect on my behalf and on behalf of our Board of Directors before sharing with you my opinions at our assembly meeting for September.

I would like to thank Mr. Professor Gökhan Çetinsaya, President of the Council of Higher Education, who have made us happy by attending our assembly meeting this month entitled "A New Look at the Cooperation Between Universities and Industry as Production Economy Regains Prominence". Welcome.

Our esteemed rector and vice chancellor is among us today. I would like to thank you, Mr. Professor İsmail Yüksek, Rector of Yıldız Technical University and Mr. Professor Mehmet Sabri Çelik, Vice Chancellor of Istanbul Technical University for your attendance. Welcome.

Dear Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

We, together with the entire nation, have rejoiced over the safe and sound return of our consulate staff members, abducted and held hostage in Mosul for 101 days, to our country and their families as a result of commendable efforts.

We at Istanbul Chamber of Industry would like to congratulate everyone involved in the efforts of this joyful development.

We're moving closer to the celebration of the holy Sacrifice Festival that will help us bolster sentiments of fraternity and solidarity.

Unfortunately, saddening conflicts all across the world including those around us have not ceased as we are preparing to live this day in which our love for each other and our country will grow even bigger.

I sincerely believe that we will further strengthen our unity and solidarity seeing our differences as richness as we always do, building upon the peace and trust of having been able to stand united on this land for a thousand years.

With this belief and understanding in mind, I wish that the holy Sacrifice Festival will bring universal peace, first and foremost, and comfort to our country, the entire Muslim world and all humanity and I would like to wish you all, ahead of time, a happy festival.

Dear Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

As you all know and probably have been following in the press, having obtained the authorization from you during the extraordinary assembly meeting earlier this month, we have started the tender process of our Odakule building.

In the meantime, we as the Board of Directors have decided to terminate the intended project of building our new center in the district of Eyüp. I would like to inform you that we will carry out and conclude our search for a new location and the management thereof in consultation with our assembly in the coming days.

On the other hand, we are not thinking of launching the tender process for a long-term lease of our current center building without finalizing our search for a new location for our center.

For the purposes of onsite analysis of the economic situation and the investment environment, negotiation of cooperation possibilities and improving communication between chambers, we will be organizing a trip to our province of Sivas between October 17 and 19, 2014 with the participation of our members of the assembly. We are expecting you all to join us on this trip.

Dear Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

During the last three decades of globalization, we have been witness to how industrialized Western economies shifted their production in other parts of the world. While many countries, Asian countries in particular, made an economic breakthrough based on mass production, Western economies headed for service and finance sectors.

Unfortunately, our country was also caught by this wind before completing its industrialization process and entered a phase in which the share of industry in the economy shrunk each year.

The most significant consequence of the global crisis that erupted in 2008 was that this negative process started to disappear in the world on a general basis. In other words, the model which excludes industry and lets finance dominate the economy started to weaken on a global level.

As an indicator of this weakening, many developed countries, chief of them being the US, have shown efforts in recent years to withdraw their industrial production to their own countries. We are observing how these countries, as part of these efforts, are aiming to bring their design and development activities under a single single roof, outperform their competitors in creativity and help their economies gain a new momentum focusing on production.

The United States, Northern European countries and Japan stand out as the most advanced countries in this competition. These countries give weight to science, education, technology and innovation and invest highly in these fields with a long-term perspective. These approaches also manifest the world how they consider long-term thinking, forecasting and planning very important.

In brief, economic competition is gradually increasing across the world. Grabbing a bigger share in the global economy is getting more difficult by the day. Even darker days are awaiting countries with low educational quality and knowledge, weak R&D capacity and insufficient innovation and design power.

I would like to share with you some figures in order to give a concrete picture of these findings. It's interesting to note how, in terms of purchasing power parity, the USA spends 465 billion dollars, China 284 billion dollars, Japan 165 billion dollars and Germany 92 billion dollars for R&D in 2014. While South Korea, which was once in a situation similar to Turkey, spends 63 billion dollars and India 44 billion dollars in R&D, Turkey has joined the global competition with 11 billion dollar spending in R&D. As shown by these figures, we are unfortunately not placing enough emphasis on science, research and development.

I can say that we are facing the dire consequences of this in the global competitiveness index. According to the 2014-2015 evaluation, our country is listed 45th among 144 countries in competitiveness. We are listed 59th in scientist and engineer accessibility, 64th in the Quality of Scientific Research Institutions and 61st in the Cooperation between Universities and Industry in R&D.

Now I would like to draw your attention to another issue which I find important. R&D spending is not efficiently turned into an end product. In fact, the number of patent applications per a million persons in Turkey is between 30 to 50 times lower than those in developed countries such as Germany, Japan and Korea.

As a result, these bad grades unquestionably lead us all to reflect on our own responsibilities.

Dear Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

As I have just mentioned, as production economy gains prominence in an environment of increasing competition, the prospect of a Turkey with a greater competitiveness on a global level requires a new economic development model in which industry is placed at the center.

The absolute must of this model should be a reliable, efficient, environmentally conscious and sustainable production structure of high added value, based on advanced technology and reducing foreign-source dependency.

Within this framework, we are highly pleased by the recent emphasis of our Dear Prime Minister in particular and related Dear Deputy Prime Ministers and ministers on the need that Turkey prioritize industrialization and become a producing society.

As Istanbul Chamber of Industry, we have shown extensive and leading effort in the past 15 months in almost all of our activities and statements, chiefly during our Industry Congress in May, to help production economy regain prominence and we will continue these efforts. I would like to hereby express our pleasure about how our leading efforts to this day have been met with positive response by political authorities.

We are aware that very important duties fall to our industry and industrialists as production economy is regaining prominence in our country as well.

With this awareness in mind, we perfectly trust the the scientific support and contribution of our higher education institutions which we believe they will continue to provide just as they have done so far.

We find your presence here today, Professor Gökhan Çetinsaya, the distinguished President of our Council of Higher Education, very important and meaningful.

Dear Professor, I would like to express my great interest and enthusiasm for the opinions you will be sharing in our meeting today, in light of your scientific work acclaimed both on national and international levels and your vast academic vision.

Dear Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

The age we are in today is called Information Age. The production and economic understanding of this age is based on sustainable growth and development alongside with the concept of Holistic Development which was the main theme of our last Industry Congress. I would like add that humanity has arrived at the point of embracing such an approach as a result of the realization, after miserable experiences, that natural resources are limited and will be exhausted.

In brief, the entire humanity is going through a massive change on local, national and global levels. It is in this process of change that production economy is regaining importance mainly in central,

developed countries. In line with this, cooperation between universities and industry also appears on the agenda again with a new perspective.

The universities, academic institutes and research centers in our country have a lot of responsibility in this regard. While nobody imagines that universities will continue to exist as they have done so far, it becomes increasingly indispensable that universities cooperate way more strongly with industry in a result-oriented manner.

In this context, we are observing how universities in developed countries cooperate with industry as they achieve remarkable developments and gain dynamism for transformation.

A cursory glance at the history of cooperation between universities and industry shows the first example in the US. The report entitled "Science - The Endless Frontier" presented to the President of the US in 1945 included the finding that the knowledge in universities is the only endless factor for the constant growth of the economy.

Subsequently, the National Science Foundation founded in 1950 was the first institution in the world enabling cooperation between universities and industry. In the following decades, the silicon valley was built in the US, public funding programs which enabled the invention of internet were implemented and necessary legal amendments were put in place for the commercialization of inventions.

Meanwhile, thanks to the adoption of an important law in 1980, researchers and universities could receive a share from the commercialization of the products they developed. What is actually important about the related law is that it triggered a breakthrough in cooperation between universities and industry in the US.

This process of cooperation between universities and industry launched in the US has come to be one of the most important factors in the formation of information economy and information society in the world today. I would like to underline the fact that Western European countries and Japan have followed suit and joined the global competition from 1980s onwards.

In 1980, science parks which represent important models in the world today were founded in the UK and France. Currently there are more than 4 thousand postgraduate and PhD students in the Warwick Science Park in the UK who continue their education while working in companies.

400 companies with a total of 32 staff members operate in the Nice Sophia Antipolis science park of France. In Germany we see the Fraunhofer chain made up of 67 institutes, a total of 23 thousand staff members and an annual budget of 1,7 billion euros. Japan joins the global competition with more than 800 higher education institutions with very strong infrastructure and has a fulltime R&D army of 655 persons mostly in the private sector.

These figures show that countries which have so far laid emphasis on cooperation between universities and industry and invested in this field early on reap the fruits. For instance, there are 37 American, 28 EU and 22 Japanese companies among the top 100 world companies with highest investment in R&D. And it is not a coincidence that 25 of these top 100 companies doubled their annual profits in a decade.

Taking into consideration the examples in the world that I have mentioned, we should now bring onto our agenda out-of-the-box proposals for a cooperation between universities and industry that is different from those in the past and which is healthy, effective and sustainable.

We should now assess the creation of a "league of distinguished universities" in Turkey. This system applied in the US, emulated first by China and then by Western European countries, has great benefits. Countries with a "league of distinguished universities" take their most developed universities to an even higher level and achieve higher competitiveness in the world.

In addition, we also observe how research universities and teaching universities are separate across the world.

Mr. Professor Gökhan Çetinsaya, we pay close attention to your opinion that "mechanisms to further encourage the research university model should be developed". I would like to hereby add that we sincerely agree with your call to discuss issues such as "writing of theses in cooperation with universities and industry".

On the other hand, our priority cooperation areas should be in opening universities to competition, consideration of the needs of sectors in curricula, opening of postgraduate programs to meet the needs of qualified employees, enabling undergraduate students to be introduced to the sector prior to graduation through internship.

At this juncture, it should be noted that we appreciate recent activities for Technology Transfer Offices enabling cooperation between universities and industry in innovation.

We believe that in the coming term, Technology Development Areas of Technology Transfer Offices will be more active and will work closer with the industrialist than even Organized Industrial Zones.

Dear Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

As you all know, we as Istanbul Chamber of Industry, have launched the cooperation platform entitled "Industry Platform" as a result of our recent activities at the rectorate levels of universities.

Led by Istanbul Chamber of Industry and in cooperation with our long-established state universities in Istanbul namely Istanbul University, Yıldız Technical University, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul Technical University and Marmara Universities, the "Industry Platform" is founded in order to enable effective cooperation between industrial firms, technology transfer offices, academics and all related institutions and organizations. I would like to thank again our dear rectors who have given great commitment and support to this process.

I would like to inform you that we are working towards involving more partners in the coming terms into this platform designed as a living system.

We organized two workshops in June in order to contribute to the determination of the strategic road map of Industry Platform, establish a healthy and sustainable relationship between universities and industry and foster mutual trust.

Let's take a look at the results of our workshops carried out with the presence of many participants from universities and industry and where every participant expressed opinions.

It has been found that the most pronounced obstacle before the cooperation between universities and industry is "lack of communication". There was marked emphasis on the "lack of trust" between our industrialist and the academics most probably due to lack of communication.

Another great obstacle is the issue of time. Our academics cannot focus on research projects because of their workloads in teaching and publications.

According to participants, legislative problems are also a major obstacle.

Perhaps one of the most significant obstacles was the absence of an umbrella organization to organize cooperation between universities and industry. Participants expressed that they felt the absence of an organization to satisfy the need of communication and which also has command on the places and mechanisms that could offer solutions for the needs of industrial firms.

At this very juncture, we are observing yet again the importance and the great responsibility of the "Industry Platform" founded under our leadership. I would like to also express that the model we are creating here now will set an example for other chambers of industry as well.

As we are creating this model, we consider it very important that the state plays an active role and amend related legislation towards the minimization of obstacles before cooperation between universities and industry, strengthen motivation of the academics and enable the universities to acquire a structure oriented towards research.

In brief, I have no doubt that, together with the support of our Council of Higher Education, we will solve all of our problems with scheduled negotiations through a cooperation based on sincerity and trust.

As we continue our scheduled negotiations towards solving our common problems, we believe that we have to get to work as well.

It is in this regard that Istanbul Chamber of Industry will be taking its first major step with the platform founded with five of our universities. We will be launching in the coming months the web portal that will bring together the project needs of our industry in research and development with the solution proposals of technology transfer offices.

Dear Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

We have embarked on a long and ambitious journey together. Dear Professor Gökhan Çetinsaya, your presence here today is an indicator of the emphasis you lay on our industry and industrialists and is a source of hope for us.

As I conclude my speech, I would like to highlight the importance of the culture of industry-university cooperation between Istanbul Chamber of Industry, the most powerful chamber of industry in Turkey, and higher education institutions, for the development of the country. I would like to hereby welcome again all of our distinguished guests and greet you all with love and respect on my behalf and on behalf of our Board of Directors.