



Mr. Geoffroy Roux de Bezieux  
The President of the 'Movement of the Enterprises  
of France' (MEDEF)

# BET ON NON-OIL SECTOR

THE LEADING NETWORK OF ENTREPRENEURS IN FRANCE 'MEDEF' BRINGS TOGETHER 173,000 COMPANIES FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. IN JULY 2019, A DELEGATION OF MORE THAN 60 MEMBER COMPANIES OF THE NETWORK CAME TO BAKU TO EXPLORE THE ONGOING REFORMS AND THE MAIN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN AZERBAIJAN. PRESIDENT OF MEDEF, MR. GEOFFROY ROUX DE BEZIEUX, WHO HEADED THE DELEGATION, TOLD AZERI OBSERVER MAGAZINE ABOUT THE GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS FROM THIS VISIT.

BY OXANA VALIYEVA  
AZERI OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

**Question:** *How do you assess the current level of cooperation between MEDEF, French business and Azerbaijan?*

**Answer:** We have a good level of cooperation. However, the potential of the country (in terms of doing business with foreign partners, including France) and the openness of people I have met during the visit shows that we can and should do much more.

**Q.:** *What kind of support does MEDEF offer to French companies willing to enter or expand its activity in the Azerbaijani market?*

**A.:** We have brought a very big delegation made of 65 French companies from 12 different sectors to Azerbaijan. The delegation includes representatives of enterprises, which numbers thousands of employees, to small and medium-sized businesses with a few dozen employees. Our job is to help them get support from the Azerbaijani president and ministers, and open the doors to launch and expand their business here.

**Q.:** *What are the prospects of enhancement of our cooperation? What are the most promising spheres?*

**A.:** France is a traditional partner of Azerbaijan in oil and

gas, and we have representatives of this sphere in our delegation. However, the president of Azerbaijan has made it clear that the current strategy of the country is diversification of economy and development of its non-oil sector. So the majority of companies which came with me, are from other sectors such as construction, digital technologies, luxury goods production and agriculture. I believe the most promising sector for our cooperation is agriculture, as it produces food. Additionally, we have a big potential for cooperation in tourism and digital technologies, as well as some other spheres.

**Q.:** *Could you tell our readers about the agenda of your visit to Azerbaijan?*

**A.:** Within the visit I had meetings with the president, the first vice-president and the ministers of finance, transport and communications, and energy of Azerbaijan. My agenda also includes a press conference, a working session at The Azerbaijani-French University (UFAZ), participation in the opening ceremony France-Azerbaijan Business Forum, a meeting with SOCAR and other oil companies, as well as a tourist visit to the old city of Baku.

**Q.:** *What kind of cooperation with French companies are Azerbaijani authorities looking for?*

**A.:** I think they want foreign investments, many in the non-oil sector, which will help them to grow and diversify the economy.

**Q.:** *What goals do you plan to achieve with this visit?*

**A.:** We have two main goals. First is to help French companies to either expand their business or create a business in Azerbaijan. Second is to raise the profile of Azerbaijan in France, and pass the message from Azerbaijan to the French president and its government.

'I BELIEVE THE MOST PROMISING SECTOR FOR OUR COOPERATION IS AGRICULTURE, AS IT PRODUCES FOOD. ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE A BIG POTENTIAL FOR COOPERATION IN TOURISM AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES...'

