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Address by H.E. Halil Akinci

**Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States
to 978th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

(19 December 2013, Vienna)

**Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to be here at the OSCE Permanent Council, on behalf of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States in short as the Turkic Council. I would like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk as Chairperson for giving me this opportunity to address for the third time the Permanent Council. This is a reflection of regular dialogue between the OSCE and the Turkic Council, which share common goals as well as common concerns in terms of creating an environment of security, in its broader sense, in the OSCE geography.

On this occasion, I would like to **congratulate the Ukrainian Chairmanship** for the completion of its successful term that brought a realistic and pragmatic approach to all major areas of the OSCE's activities, including partnership issues and relations with regional and international organizations. Thus, the decisions taken and documents approved during the 20th Ministerial Council Meeting held on 5-6 December 2014 in Kyiv, with the great hospitality of Ukrainian authorities, showed the positive contribution of the Chairmanship to developing the agenda of the OSCE in all three dimensions.

Taking this opportunity, let me express my gratitude to the Ukrainian Chairmanship for the invitation to participate in the Ministerial Council Meeting. I was unfortunately not allowed to travel because of my medical condition, but my representatives who took part in the meeting enjoyed the Ukrainian hospitality and had the opportunity to be informed about the developments within the OSCE. In this regard, we believe that "**Helsinki+40 Process the Roadmap towards 2015**", jointly presented at the Ministerial Council Meeting by Ministers of Ukraine, Switzerland and Serbia, shall increase OSCE's interaction with international and regional organizations working in similar fields, in compliance with the **guidelines provided by "the Platform for Co-operative Security", the operational document attached**

to the Charter for European Security adopted at the 1999 OSCE Summit held in Istanbul.

In this connection, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Turkic Council Member States through their **joint statement distributed at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Kyiv** reflected the founding philosophy of the Turkic Council which corresponds to the goals of the OSCE. Furthermore, they reiterated that their commitments within the OSCE and the Turkic Council to fully realize the overall objectives set at the 2010 OSCE Summit in Astana, with the assumption that regional organizations; such as the Turkic Council, play a key role in strengthening the overall agenda for a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. The Member States of the Turkic Council, who are also the Members of the OSCE, stress their readiness to contribute to the building of such a community that is **“free of dividing lines, conflicts, spheres of influence and zones of different levels of security”** as mentioned in **“Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards A Security Community”**.

Moreover, active participation of project directors of the Turkic Council Secretariat in the “OSCE's Mediterranean Conference "Enhancing the Role of Women in Public, Political and Economic Life" held on 28-29 October 2013 in Monaco, upon the invitation of the host country showed that there is significant room for establishing organization-to-organization and secretariat -to-secretariat ties between the OSCE and the Turkic Council.

In this regard, let me remind you that at the Turkic Council Summits, Heads of State of the Turkic Council Member States refer regularly to the commitment of the Council to the goals and principles of the UN Charter, the OSCE documents, and above all to the Helsinki Final Act. This is proof that Turkic Council is committed to the goal of developing a close and mutually beneficial regional collaboration with the OSCE as well as other organizations sharing similar values and common grounds. In this regard, the Turkic Council has **become observer to the ECO in October 2012**, and expects to obtain observer status at the OIC.

Excellencies,

Every year I come here to reaffirm the founding vision of the Turkic Council and share information with this high-level platform of the OSCE about our activities. During my last two addresses to the Permanent Council, I introduced the **Turkic Council as an emerging regional organization** and informed you on the process of its institutionalization as well as its initial projects in the fields of economic and cultural cooperation.

The institutionalization of the Turkic Council will be completed in the upcoming period when the last intergovernmental document enters into force. Meanwhile, starting from the beginning of the next year, **Turkic Academy** will function as an international institution in Astana, which will focus on Turkology and related disciplines.

Another important institution – the **Turkic Cultural Heritage Foundation in Baku** – which was designed to provide financial support to the preservation of Turkic heritage in member countries will also become functional from the beginning of 2014.

Additionally, **the Turkic University Union** was established this year and it will be the foundation of increased cooperation among the Member States in the higher education area.

In its 4th year of operation, it is impossible to cover all aspects of political, economic and cultural activities of the Turkic Council, but I will touch upon most important issues, which at the same time intersect with the overall goals of OSCE.

As I already outlined in my last presentation, we continued to hold regular meetings of **Ministers in charge of Economy** and its operational mechanism – the working groups in economic cooperation – with the aim of overcoming current obstacles in our economic relations and in order to deepen ties through tangible projects with the participation of the private sector representatives. We are focused on **pragmatic initiatives to support economic growth of our Member States and create synergy** among us as well as our neighbors with the understanding that comprehensive peace and security in our geography is highly dependent on broader economic cooperation among the regional countries.

Excellencies,

Therefore, Turkic Council stands ready to closer cooperation with the OSCE goals in terms of its goals in economic dimension and hopes to develop co-operation with the OSCE which should create favorable conditions for greater stability, security and prosperity in the region.

In that respect, we find very useful the activities of **the OSCE Economic Forum and its Economic and Environmental Subcommittee**. We stand ready for cooperation in this sphere as well.

At the Third Summit held in August 2013 in Azerbaijan with the participation of Presidents of the Member States and Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan, the Council of Heads of State, which is the highest level decision making body of the

Turkic Council, defined the **further cooperation in the field of transport as a direction of huge potential.**

You are all aware that three members of the Council are landlocked countries. Turkic Council welcomes the OSCE involvement in transport matters enshrined by the Helsinki Final Act (1975), the Bonn Document (1990) and the Maastricht Strategy Document for the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension (2003) as well as Decision on Future of Transport Dialogue in the OSCE which was adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council in Brussels (2006).

It is encouraging that 2006 OSCE Economic Forum process highlighted, among others, the special needs of OSCE Landlocked Developing Countries i.e. in Central Asia and South Caucasus. The support of OSCE to the implementation of the **Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries**, adopted by the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation in Almaty on 28-29 August 2003; is very important on the eve of **10-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014.**

One of the assigned tasks of the Turkic Council Secretariat is to enlist the relevant international organizations' support to national initiatives of the Member States. Our ultimate goal is to develop efficient, environmentally-sound, safe, secure, integrated and sustainable transport systems among the Member States with an aim to integrate them into international transport network.

It is our intention to develop transport network in collaboration with other regional states. In this connection, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have concluded a **trilateral agreement with Georgia** in addition to the quadrilateral agreement signed last year. Thus Georgia is partner state and we intend to include China as well.

Therefore, **the 1st Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the Turkic Council** stated that the realization of joint tangible transport projects under Turkic Council will enable further expansion of the North-South and East-West corridors in the region.

Turkic Council initiated the **Sister Seaport cooperation** among the Ports of Baku, Aktau, and Samsun of the Member States.

In addition to the Working group on Transport, Parties also agreed to establish a **Coordination Council**, which came together at Deputy Ministerial level on 10th December in Istanbul.

It is a well-established fact that States may not fully benefit from transport corridors if there are non-physical barriers such as lengthy procedures at border crossings. Therefore, the **Heads of Customs Administrations** at their second meeting agreed to evaluate the current situation and conduct studies to improve the efficiency of border control processing. In that respect, the joint customs experts of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan carried out border-crossing point visits to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in July 2013 within the framework of the Caravansarai Project initiated by Turkey.

In this connection, it is worth mentioning that the jointly produced **Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings – A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective** by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the Transport Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serve as practical guide for our experts.

Excellencies,

This year the Member States **launched security consultations** covering non-military sphere. Security issues have always been an important item on the agenda of the Council of Heads of State throughout the Summits Process that started in 1992, and later during the Turkic Council Summits.

In this respect, we welcome, among others, the adoption of Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the OSCE's Efforts to Address Transnational Threats, and the Decision No. 7/13 Combating Trafficking in Human Beings at the Ministerial Council Meeting recently held in Kyiv, as well as the **annual organization of "OSCE Security Days"** that provides a broad and open discussion on security issues in the OSCE region and beyond.

Thus, one of the important agenda items of the Turkic Council security consultations was the **collaboration of the Member States on Afghanistan and with Afghanistan**. Our Member States consider the situation in Afghanistan as a priority on their foreign policy agenda and exert serious efforts to facilitate reconstruction in this country, which has a crucial role in the long-term security and stability in Central Asia.

In that regard, **common views of the Turkic Council outlined at the Ministerial Conference of Istanbul Process on Afghanistan held on 26 April 2013 in Almaty** stressed the vital role of intensifying cooperation and dialogue between Afghanistan

and regional countries through different platforms, particularly the Istanbul Process. As a further step, Turkic Council plans to have a **meeting with Afghan authorities in the format of 4+1 at Foreign Ministers level in 2014** to discuss issues of common concern.

In view of ISAF's upcoming withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, the Member States support the continuation of a work toward developing a multilateral mechanism of cooperation between the OSCE, the UN, and other regional organizations in order to resolve Afghanistan-related issues. We believe that the OSCE, with its significant experience, together with the UN and other international organizations could help strengthen the capacity of border services in Central Asian countries, and participate in the implementation of programs to combat narcotics, production and trafficking in Afghanistan and bordering countries.

During the security consultations, in addition to the issues related to Afghanistan, Parties touched upon regional issues such as Armenia-Azerbaijan Upper Karabakh conflict and the situation in Cyprus and their implications for regional and international peace and security; struggle against terrorism and other trans-national threats; and cooperation within UN system, OSCE, Council of Europe, OIC, CICA and other international and regional organizations; and decided to establish a permanent contact group for security consultations.

The next round of the security consultations will take place in Astana in the first quarter of 2014.

Excellencies,

Upon invitation of Azerbaijan, the Joint Election Observation Mission of the Turkic Council **monitored the Presidential Election in Azerbaijan on October 9, 2013**. This observation mission was the third mission commissioned by the Turkic Council to observe elections in its Member States.

Turkic Council's Joint Mission carried out its observation activities in various non-occupied and mostly Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)-settled villages of Aghdam district of Karabakh. It was noted that Turkic Council Observation Mission was the only international observer mission acting in the region.

Despite all efforts by the Government of Azerbaijan to alleviate the pains of the people displaced from their homeland, the unacceptable status-quo will remain a threat to security, peace, stability and prosperity of the region and a main challenge to international community.

Mr. Chairperson,

**Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished delegations,**

2003 Maastricht Strategy of OSCE as well as similar thematic OSCE documents and decisions issued until today advocated continuation of developing contacts with organizations in other regions, and consider ways in which OSCE norms, principles, commitments and values could be shared with these regions, in particular neighboring areas. Thus, the number of the organizations and institutions invited to the OSCE high platforms has increased considerably in last decade which demonstrates the OSCE's firm stand to strengthen a bridge of dialogue and mutual co-operation with all relevant organizations and institutions.

The main idea to which I tried to draw your attention today, as the Secretary General of Turkic Council, is how to launch and promote collaboration between the two organizations so as to create synergies in the region. I tried to put forward the thematic areas prioritized within the Turkic Council agenda that would bring added-value to OSCE's continuous efforts to provide security and stability in the region.

Excellencies,

Since we all share the conviction that security is not a narrow concept and are determined to act on behalf of peace, stability, security and prosperity in Eurasia, there is no impediment to our collaboration in all three dimensions of OSCE realizing common goals shared by two organizations.

I shall conclude my statement by **welcoming the incoming Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships** and wish every success in their future endeavors, and reaffirming our readiness to cooperate with them during their upcoming terms.

Thank you.