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FIFTH SUMMIT OF THE TURKIC COUNCIL: A RISING ACTOR IN REGIONAL COOPERATION IN EURASIA

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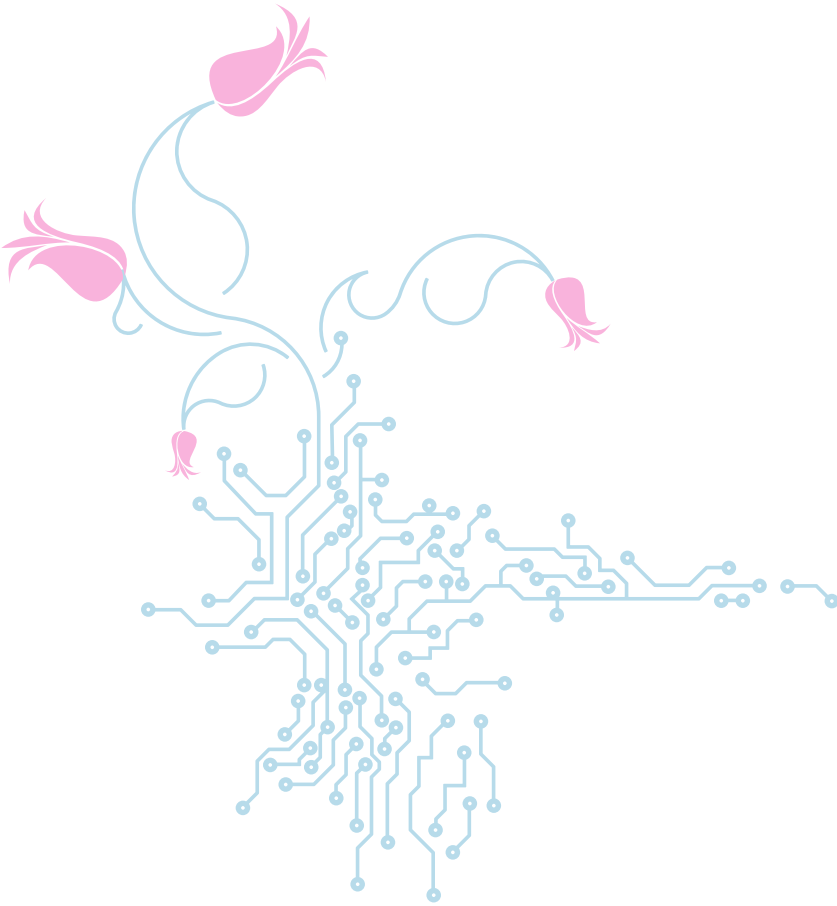
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SAM **Chairman's** **Message**

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THE TURKIC COUNCIL: A STRONG REGIONAL MECHANISM TO ENHANCE COOPERATION IN EURASIA

Ramil HASANOV
Secretary General
Turkic Council

The changes in Eurasia over the last 25 years have left an important impact on world history. In fact, the Eurasian region has always been subject to dynamic geo-strategic developments. Nevertheless, the collapse of the Soviet Union paved the way for a reshuffling of all cards to open a new page for the region. The emergence of five independent Turkic States on the international arena in addition to the Republic of Turkey was a game-changer for new geo-political and economic calculations in Eurasia. Under these circumstances, the Turkic States found a favorable climate to strengthen the foundations of their solidarity. The first Summit meeting of Presidents of the Turkic Speaking States in 1992 was convened with this essential aim. The Summits Process which saw 10 summit meetings over 18 years played a significant role in the enhancement of this solidarity. However, without an institutional structure, these Summit meetings produced little more than sincere expressions of intentions to work together. The pressing need for a permanent Secretariat to follow up on decisions resulted in the establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, as a regional cooperation mechanism, with the signing of the 2009 Nakhchivan Agreement. Accordingly, operationalization of its international secretariat in 2010 provided an increasing impetus to cooperation among the Turkic States.

Today, after concluding its institutionalization process, the Turkic Council realizes its Fifth Summit as a rising actor in regional cooperation in Eurasia. In such a short period of time since its establishment, with its affiliated organizations such as the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries-TURKPA, the International Organization of Turkic Culture-TURKSOY, the Turkic Business Council, the International Turkic Academy and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, the Turkic Council, as the umbrella institution of the Turkic cooperation, has

marked significant achievements to foster cooperation in numerous fields not only among its Member States but also in Eurasia. In the regular coordination meetings that we convene with our affiliated organizations, we attribute importance to take actions to this end.

Drawing strength from its inclusive, comprehensive and pragmatic approach based on regional ownership, the Turkic Council has extended the scope of its agenda step by step. The fact that each Turkic Council Summit is dedicated to a specific theme of cooperation has been instrumental in drawing its road map ahead. After the first four Summits focused on cooperation in “economy”, “education, culture and science”, “transportation and connectivity” and “tourism”, respectively, guided with the instructions of our Heads of State, the theme of the Fifth Summit was determined as cooperation in “information and media”. While working on these areas, we have continued to enhance multilateral cooperation in the area of foreign policy among our Member States. Meanwhile we have also taken up issues including sustainable development, sports, and youth to the benefit of our region. Within this wide ranging agenda, so far, we have achieved significant progress in the political, economic, educational and cultural arenas.

First of all, the political will of our Member States displayed at the highest level to intensify collaboration and coordination within the Turkic Council underpins the gist of our working methodology. In this regard, in addition to the regular Summit meetings of the Presidents, the Foreign Ministers of our Member States meet regularly, both formally and informally. As

a result, we are taking more coordinated action within international organizations. So far, we have issued joint statements at several international meetings. Our voting patterns at the UN are also converging. We have launched a process of security consultations within the Turkic Council where we discuss security issues of common concern regarding our Member States and the neighbourhood around us. Cooperation launched among the Official Foreign Policy Research Centers of our Member States also serves as a brainstorming platform to analyze regional developments and to raise global awareness about them. This, of course, requires the existence of objective and impartial information resources. Thus, based on the theme of the Fifth Summit, the Council is exerting efforts for the establishment of an International Turkic News Channel to be launched in the shortest time possible. Meantime, the cooperation process initiated among the official news agencies and national television channels of the Member States at the First Turkic Council Ministerial Meeting held in August 2015 in Astana pursues the same purpose.

On the other hand, bearing aware of the intertwined character of regional cooperation in today’s circumstances, we attribute utmost importance to enhancing our relations with other regional organizations with which we share mutual interests. Therefore, as an observer to the Economic Cooperation Organization since 2012, we cooperate with a wide range of regional organizations and platforms including OSCE, OIC, CICA, BSEC, and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process for Afghanistan focusing on developments in their agendas. Moreover, we especially collaborate with relevant UN specialized agencies including UNDP, sharing their

global concerns and priorities. Meanwhile, with our bid to become observer to the OIC and the UN General Assembly, we assume the responsibility to be a rising regional actor in Eurasia.

Secondly, in line with the significant untapped economic potential of the region along the traditional Silk Road, the Turkic Council considers economy as the cement of regional cooperation. In this regard, we have been making efforts to determine the hurdles facing increased economic interaction among us and then setting up mechanisms to overcome them. So far, the Ministers in charge of Economy have met four times following the working group meetings specialized in specific areas. Furthermore, through the Forums organized by the Turkic Business Council, which is in close contact with similar bodies throughout the world, the private sectors of our Member States are naturally engaged in this field of cooperation.

Customs and transportation constitute two inseparable items to further connect our region to the rest of the world in economic terms. In this regard, the Heads of Customs administrations have been meeting to cooperate on improving the physical and legislative infrastructure of our border crossing points. Our Ministers of Transport have gathered two times so far, a Coordination Council was established at the Deputy Ministers level to bring immediate solutions to problems faced in the field by the operators and a “sister-port relationship” has been built up among the Aktau, Baku and Samsun ports. At the same time, the Turkic Council closely cooperates with regional and international organizations including the World Customs Organization and

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to expand relevant global standards in our Member States and beyond.

Taking into account the wealth of historical and cultural heritage as well as natural and geographical diversity of the Turkic States located along the traditional Silk Road, tourism generates another main driving force of socio-economic development in our region. In this regard, the implementation of the Turkic Council-Modern Silk Road joint tour package project, with the engagement of the private sector of our Member States, has been the top priority on our agenda in this field. Through the Memorandum of Understanding signed between our Secretariats, we work jointly with the UN World Tourism Organization for the revival of this Road as an attractive and profitable tourism destination with global standards.

Third, the educational and cultural arena is considered by the Turkic Council as the backbone for furthering cooperation in our region. Regular meetings of the Education Ministers are an important milestone in streamlining our efforts in this area. The preparation of common history and literature books by the Turkic Academy to be included in the national curricula of our Member States represents a visionary measure that was taken not only for better understanding our past but also for shaping our future. Similarly, the exchange programmes at the high school level to be launched, in addition to Turkic youth camps, will increase interaction among the Turkic youth.

The Turkic University Union established within the Turkic Council is a promising initiative to improve the quality of higher education through introducing common

contemporary standards as well as to create an atmosphere conducive to cultural exchanges among young generations. The Union works on the projects contributing to raise a Turkic youth that is well aware of its roots and ready to act for the welfare of the region. On the other hand, the projects that we develop in the field of sports, including organization of the Turkic Universiade and World Nomad Games, will put another dimension to reach overarching goals in this direction.

Our endeavours over the last five years are a glimpse of the Turkic world acting in unison and an indication of what we are capable of doing. This is not where we stop. Stronger cooperation among the Turkic States certainly benefits our region and the world as much as the Turkic peoples themselves. Together, we have a greater capacity to contribute to regional stability and development. Turkic States--Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan--account for a population of around 150 million, cover an area of over 4.5 million square kilometers, and have a total GDP exceeding 2.1 trillion dollars, ranking 13th as a whole in the world. Their untapped collective potential is too valuable to overlook.

There is no doubt that Eurasia will continue to be at the heart of geo-strategic formulations in the period ahead. Inclusive, comprehensive and pragmatic approaches for cooperation will be more than needed for further empowerment of the region. Implementing such an approach, the Turkic Council spares no effort to enhance cooperation in the political, economic, educational and cultural arenas among the Turkic States and in the neighbourhood. Accordingly, with a result-oriented mindset, in every action that we take we concentrate on how to provide additional assets to cooperation in and around our region. Intensifying collaboration and coordination among our Member States in different sectors and building mutually beneficial relations with regional and international organizations are a clear testimony to this fact.

Our vision is contributing to building a stronger Eurasia in harmony and prosperity. This Fifth Summit meeting will be another step on our way to achieving this vision. As a responsible regional actor, we are ready to take all necessary actions in this direction because we truly believe that “actions speak louder than words”.



THE TURKIC COUNCIL: A RISING ACTOR IN REGIONAL COOPERATION IN EURASIA

Elmar MAMMADYAROV

Foreign Minister

Republic of Azerbaijan

The Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (The Turkic Council) was established with the signing of the Nakhchivan Agreement of 3 October 2009 with an overarching goal of enhancing cooperation and partnership among the Turkic Speaking States. As an international intergovernmental organization, the Turkic Council embraces the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, along with other universally recognized principles of international law. Equitable cooperation, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, the inviolability of internationally recognized borders and non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States and the development of good neighborly relations set the foundation of cooperation within the organization.

As such, the organization is committed to strengthening mutual confidence among the members, maintaining peace in the region and beyond, promoting coordinated stances on foreign policy issues, combatting international terrorism, armed separatism, religious and political extremism and trans-border crimes, drug trafficking, promoting effective regional and bilateral cooperation in all areas of common interest, creating favorable conditions for trade and investment, striving for comprehensive and balanced economic growth, social and cultural development, good governance and protection of human rights, expanding interaction in the fields of science, technology, education and culture, encouraging interaction among media agencies of the member states and wider communication, promoting exchange of legal information, and enhancing legal cooperation.

The Turkic Council as an institutionalized mechanism is also an expression of willingness of our peoples based on ethnic kinship and the traditional bonds of fraternity, a common history and

culture to build new bridges of friendship and partnership among our countries and neighboring regions and other good-willing partners. In line with the solidarity demonstrated by Member States to keep and strengthen the historical, cultural and linguistic ties among each other, one may easily grasp the power that lies in the backbone of the Council. Moreover, our organization plays an irreplaceable role by promoting and preserving the historical roots of Turkic speaking nations as well as embracing our common culture, traditions, material and moral values.

On our way towards building new patterns of cooperation, the Fifth Summit of the Turkic Council hosted in Astana, Kazakhstan is yet another important opportunity. The regular summit meetings of the Turkic Council in different cities of the Member States are also of a kind of exploratory nature, while at the same time further strengthening the mutual knowledge and solidarity between our countries and peoples.

However, we should also acknowledge that the Member States' commitment and combined efforts for the sake of peace, stability and cooperation are also accompanied by unfortunate instances of violating territorial integrity and sovereignty, and attempts to alter forcibly the internationally recognized borders of the states, as well as international terrorism and other threats and challenges. As a matter of fact, the Republic of Azerbaijan continues to suffer from the aggression of Armenia, which has occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territories. As a result, a million Azerbaijanis faced bloody ethnic cleansing on their historical lands and became refugees and Internally Displaced People. Four resolutions of the United

Nations Security Council have demanded an immediate, unconditional and full withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. However, Armenia continues to disregard the UNSC resolutions and other documents of international organizations to cease its occupation and aggression. In this regard, the unequivocal support of the Turkic Council Member States for the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict on the basis of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan in accordance with the UNSC resolutions is highly appreciated.

It is also worth noting that steadfast efforts have been made to promote collaboration in the foreign policy sphere. Regular consultation mechanisms at the level of Foreign Ministers and coordination within other international organizations are obvious signs of this. In the meantime, the platform provided by the Turkic Council complements the existing close bilateral ties among Member States at the multilateral track. This definitely further enhances our strength and makes us stronger.

It is a positive indication that the Turkic Council is expanding its ties with regional and international organizations. As such, by building new networks of cooperation with other international organizations and good-willing partners, the Turkic Council contributes to the expansion of boundaries of peace and stability in the world. The activities of the Cooperation Council member states in some organizations, of which we are not members, are also very instrumental.

As for economic relations, it has been reiterated that there is considerable potential for the growth in turnover among the

members. We strongly believe that the heads of member states once again will state their commitment to accelerate turnover among their states. Thus, an important role for economic convergence will be played out by the Joint Turkic Investment Fund, the work on which will be soon finalized.

Special attention in economic cooperation must be paid to energy relations among the members. At present, Azerbaijan, with its seven operating oil and gas pipeline networks, has diversified the supply routes of its hydrocarbons to world markets. It is worth emphasizing the importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipelines, the construction of which was initiated and successfully completed by Azerbaijan. Overall, this was the first serious initiative linking the East and West, Asia and Europe. The TAP and TANAP gas pipeline projects are opening up new horizons in the energy strategy of Azerbaijan.

The revitalization of the Great Silk Road is already a reality. We are enriching the Silk Road and improving it with new infrastructure projects. I am glad that our transit opportunities are currently used by Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. These transporting capacities will become even broader in the coming years.

For this purpose, Azerbaijan is currently making major investments, logistical centers are being set up, and the biggest international trade seaport in the Caspian is under construction. We are modernizing our fleet ferries and tankers and have completed construction of a modern shipyard in Baku. It is clear that investment in infrastructure will benefit not only us but also all the littoral countries. We intend to be prepared

to accept large volumes of cargo from the east of the Caspian in our direction and back.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, planned to be operational in 2016, will substantially increase our transport capacities. This road will connect Azerbaijan with Europe through Georgia and Turkey, as well as with other Central Asian countries and China. Not only Azerbaijan but also all member states will benefit from this project in the future perspective. This railway will serve our peoples for centuries to come. This is a huge geopolitical and geo-economic project, a project of cooperation.

Along with economic projects, the development of cultural ties is also very important. Azerbaijan, which lies at the crossroads between the East and West, is playing the role of a bridge in the dialogue between civilizations. The establishment of the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre further contributes to the promotion of cultural dialogue between nations. The Baku International Forums on Intercultural Dialogue stand as vivid examples of how we nurture these values. The 7th Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations of the United Nations, to be hosted in Baku in 2016, is a continuation of our persistent efforts to this end. In terms of cultural cooperation, the role of TURKSOY has to be particularly highlighted. TURKSOY is an organization that unites us spiritually, in the field of culture. Our unity, of course, is underpinned by common roots, a common culture and history, and we are establishing excellent cooperation on this solid foundation. Therefore, we will continue our support to strengthen the activities of TURKSOY in the future. The recently established Turkic

Culture and Heritage Foundation, with its headquarters in Baku, will complete our endeavors in this field and set the patterns of new cooperation in the preservation and promotion of our common cultural heritage.

To realize this mission that we envisage we need to employ certain tools such as collaboration among diasporas of the member countries, interconnection among tourism sectors, educational exchange programs, and common ground for exchange of information.

To this end, the Council aims at strengthening the cooperation among Turkic speaking diasporas by establishing Regional Diaspora Centers, one of which was already launched in Ukraine in 2014. Furthermore, special attention has been paid to the development of the tourism sectors of the member countries. The establishment of the Turkic Academy in Astana is the very opportunity to open a new page in our relations in the field of education. Inter alia, the establishment of the International Turkic News Channel has been agreed upon and the recent meeting of Ministers and high ranking officials responsible for media and information held in Astana are important developments in streamlining our cooperation in the field of media.

To sum up, I believe the Council will have a long livelihood due to the values it cherishes and the mutual respect of the member states. The goals of the Council are specified in such a way as to achieve a gradual intensification of cooperation and further strengthen relations among the members. I hope the Turkic Council will continue to play an important role in bringing together the Turkic world and help to spread its virtues. Azerbaijan will continue increasing its efforts for the success of the Turkic Council, as it has been doing from its establishment. We have wonderful business relations and warm ties with all Turkic states, which are highly valued. We want the relations among all Turkic speaking countries to improve further in both bilateral and multilateral formats. Today, member states stay committed to back each other up in international organizations, such as the UN, the OSCE, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the ECO and others, and we expect this to continue in the future. After all, fraternal peoples must always be next to each other. In order to enforce peace and stability, achieve progress and prosperity, unity and development of the Turkic countries, we should continue our cooperation even more vigorously.



THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE TURKIC COUNCIL

Erlan ABDYLDAEV

Foreign Minister

Kyrgyz Republic

In 2009, Kyrgyzstan supported Turkey's initiative for the establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States. Today, the organization brings together four young fraternal countries - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. In the short time of the Turkic Council's existence there have been realized several initiatives: under the auspices of the organization, the First World Nomad Games in Kyrgyzstan were held, and both the Turkic Academy in Astana and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation in Baku were founded.

Kyrgyzstan's participation in the Turkic Council is associated with the common history of Turkic peoples and the objective desire to expand cooperation with the fraternal states and build a common future with kindred nations, while remaining proud of their national identities and history. Kyrgyzstan is confident that with the successful cooperation of the Member States, a strengthening and growing of the organization will lead to the other Turkic states joining the organization, as they currently explore the possibility by taking part in the Summits as invited guests.

For instance, Turkmenistan is continuing its participation in the Summits as a guest of honor. This means that the country has an interest in the association and could potentially become a member and enter the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States. Perhaps in the future other Turkic-speaking states will follow the lead of Turkmenistan.

In the meantime, the Turkic Council does not aim at conflict with any other political union, whether the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the participation of Kyrgyz-

stan in the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking countries is not contrary to its participation in other international organizations. On the contrary, the developing regional organization will supplement the capacity of countries of the Turkic Council.

The Turkic Council countries have many common plans and goals in many areas of cultural and humanitarian, trade-economic, investment and energy cooperation, some of which are already being implemented, and as the years go by the potential for cooperation in these areas will increase. The organization plans to create an atmosphere of universal unity of Turkic peoples in all spheres of life.

We are currently experiencing a period of crisis and various challenges that require our joint efforts to overcome them. Undoubtedly, we have in hand everything necessary for the successful implementation of our common goals--political will and considerable economic potential. In this context, our organization's mission is to maintain a stable and solid foundation for the promotion and further development of cooperation between our countries.

It is necessary to prioritize the adoption of practical and systematic solutions that will lead us to economic prosperity. This is possible only with the free movement of goods and people, capital, services and technologies; the simplification of financial and

banking operations; the introduction of advanced technologies; and investment in human resources. We believe that these issues should be the priorities of our cooperation in the coming years.

Kyrgyzstan actively supports the development of all existing and new routes and roads and liberalization of transit. This is quite an important issue for most of the Central Asian countries, which do not have direct access to sea trading ports. In this regard, taking into account the geographical location of our Turkic countries, the creation of regional operating transport corridors that can become true bridges from China to Central Asia and further to the West, is extremely important.

It is also necessary to intensify work on the implementation of mutually beneficial regional tourism and sports projects such as the "World Nomad Games", the draft of which has been proposed by the Kyrgyz side and supported by the fraternal countries. Their implementation and conduct on a regular basis will allow us to make a real breakthrough in the cultural and sporting integration of our states.

In this respect, Kyrgyzstan is ready to operate efficiently and purposefully with our partners in the Turkic Council, because tourism and sport can become a significant tool in the development and integration of our economies.



THE TURKIC COUNCIL: ENGINE OF TURKIC INTEGRATION

Erlan IDRISOV
Foreign Minister
Republic of Kazakhstan

Turkic peoples have been linked, from ancient times, through a shared cultural and historical background, by language and religion. Cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries is a symbol of the friendship and brotherhood between people of common roots. It is also, according to experts, an effective driver of regional and bilateral cooperation in many areas including trade, economics, law enforcement, the environment, culture and science.

It was at the initiative of President Nazarbayev that a fully-fledged international organization to increase cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries was created. Up until then, co-operation had been limited to periodic summits between Heads of State and kurultays.

The Turkic Council is a regional association whose goal is to strengthen the unity of the Turkic peoples. Members of the organization are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The formation of the Council was agreed to at the Summit of the Heads of Turkic Speaking States at Nakhchivan in 2009. The following year in Istanbul, it was decided to establish the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Elders and the Committee of Senior Officials as its governing bodies.

The Secretariat of the Turkic Council is now operating. Its responsibilities include monitoring the implementation of decisions made at Summits, and the organization of high and expert level meetings. Important contributions to the work of the council are made by the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries (TurkPA), the Council of Elders and the Turkic Academy headquartered in Astana. In the near future it

is expected that the Foundation of Turkic Culture and Heritage will open in Baku.

The Turkic Business Council has also been set up. Within its framework, working groups on a variety of subjects are operating. Members come from the private sector, government agencies, and the Secretariat of the Turkic Council. Their objectives include ways of eliminating the barriers which are hindering the development of trade and economic relations between the Turkic-speaking states.

Today the Turkic Council extends its reach to promote regional cooperation with the EU and the CIS countries. At the Fourth Summit in Bodrum in 2014, President Nazarbayev stressed that there was no contradiction between the Turkic Council and wider Eurasian integration.

It was in Bodrum, too, that President Nazarbayev proposed the creation of a joint Turkic TV to provide a wider forum for communication. In addition, the President suggested that the Turkic Academy develop a programme to further integration of the countries of the Turkic world.

The Fifth Summit of the Council's Heads of State takes place on September 11 in Astana. It is the second time the event has been held in Kazakhstan following the first Summit in October 2011 in Almaty. It will see the chairmanship of the Council transfer from Turkey to Kazakhstan.

It is symbolic that this Fifth anniversary Summit will be held during the celebration of the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate. It was this historic event that had such an historical, political and cultural impact over a large area of Central Asia as

well as playing an important role in the formation of Kazakh statehood.

The Astana Summit will provide the opportunity for Heads of Delegations to reflect on the work of the Council over the last five years and agree on future developments to further strengthen economic, cultural, educational and scientific co-operation as well as co-operation in the fields of tourism and information. Special focus will be given to further institutional strengthening of the Turkic world and its role in ensuring regional and international security.

As the theme of the Fifth Summit is "Cooperation in the field of information," particular attention will be given to the expansion and deepening of cooperation in the sphere of mass media. Over the past year, a great amount of work has been done to achieve these ambitions, including the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between the different countries' official news agencies, and a protocol on cooperation between the national TV channels of Member States. We have also seen the idea of an International Turkic TV channel developed.

In the sphere of economy there has also been work in a number of important areas. These include preparations for the creation of a joint investment fund and studies into cooperation over investment statistics and between the special economic zones and free zones of Member States. Regular business forums and round tables of the National Chambers of Entrepreneurs of Member States are also being conducted.

In order to implement the guidelines of the Heads of Member States given at the Bodrum Summit, which was held under

the topic of “Cooperation in the field of tourism”, memorandums of understanding between the tourist associations of the CCTS Member States, as well as between the Turkic Council and the World Tourism Organization were signed this year. In addition, to promote the attractions of the Silk Road for tourists, a recognizable tourist brand, “The Turkic Council: a modern Silk Road” has been developed. During the Summit, the Heads of State will also be presented a Turkic history textbook prepared by the Turkic Academy jointly with prominent experts.

The outcomes of the Summit, as well as the position of the Turkic Council on pressing international and regional issues, will be reflected in the form of a Declaration at its conclusion. What is clear is that Summit and the bilateral negotiations between the Heads of Turkic-speaking countries that will take place within its framework will provide a good opportunity to continue close dialogue with the key countries in the region on important international and regional issues. The summit will also be an important milestone in the strengthening of integration of the Turkic states and the institutions of Turkic cooperation.



FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF THE TURKIC WORLD: CELEBRATING THE PAST WHILE LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Feridun H. SİNİRLİOĞLU

Foreign Minister

Republic of Turkey

When the Presidents of the Turkic Speaking States convened for their first ever Summit meeting 23 years ago, dramatic changes were taking place in the international order. The Soviet Union had just collapsed, paving the way for the emergence of five independent Turkic States on the international arena. Having finally gained their freedom after so many decades, it was only logical, even natural, for Turkic States to come together at such a historic juncture to begin to envision a prosperous future based on collaboration and cooperation.

In the post-cold war era, three different transformations have been taking place simultaneously in Central Asia. To assess and understand the period since the independence of the Turkic Republics, these major transformations must be discussed and understood within their geo-political, geo-cultural and geo-economic dimensions.

The geopolitical shift concerns the changes in the region's status in international relations after the Cold War. The geo-cultural revival stems from historical undercurrents and the ongoing cultural awakening; while the geo-economic revival has been driven largely by changing demographics, as well as the robust economic dynamics of the region.

The Summits Process, which saw 10 meetings at the highest-level over 18 years, took the Turkic world through geo-political, geo-cultural and geo-economic changes that have been gradually reshaping our region. While this was a time of significant transformation, once constant proved unshakeable: Each passing year strengthened the foundations of our cohesion and solidarity.

In looking back, we must also recognize that, without an institutional structure, these Summits, while crucially important in cementing a political sense of shared destiny, could and maybe

should have produced more than strong expressions of our intent to cooperate in a more meaningful manner. Indeed, the obvious need for a permanent Secretariat to pursue the implementation of our decisions resulted in the 2009 Nakhchivan Agreement which established the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States. I pay tribute to those who worked hard and put tremendous efforts to this end.

Had I been writing this article 20 years ago, I would be discussing the historical importance of the emergence of newly independent states from the ashes of the Soviet Union. Yet, today we are proud to already witness the Fifth Summit of the Turkic Council, as well as the major successes it has produced within such a short period of time.

However, it is all too clear that, in terms of unlocking the great potential that more synergy between our nations will unleash, this is just the beginning.

Taking this opportunity, I want to send a strong and unequivocal message both to our peoples and to the international community: Robust cooperation and collaboration among Turkic States benefits our region and the world, as much as the Turkic peoples themselves.

Today, acting together, we have the capacity and the means and capabilities to contribute to regional stability and prosperity in ways we could not have imagined two decades ago.

Turkic States (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) account for a population of around 150 million, cover an area of over

4.5 million square kilometers, and have a total GDP exceeding 1.3 trillion Dollars, as a whole, ranking 13th in the world.

This untapped collective potential is simply too rich, politically, economically and socially, to ignore. We must do whatever we can to combine our means, leverage our comparative advantages and devise effective ways of harnessing our potential to the benefit of all our peoples.

As always, we cherish the commonalities, similarities and affinities, such as history, language and culture that bind us together in ways no other group of nations enjoy. Yet this can never be enough. We have no choice but to strive to build even stronger economic, political, cultural and educational bonds based on common interests which will directly benefit the well-being of our peoples.

On the other hand, it is always important to remember that the Turkic Council is neither an ethnic club nor an exclusive organization. It is an incredibly beneficial, complementary forum to the already existing cooperation mechanisms in the region.

The main goal of the Turkic Council remains to be the building and consolidation of cooperation among the Turkic States in as many areas as possible. We will continue to work to ensure that this forum helps carry bilateral relations onto a multilateral framework, so as to advance the already existing cooperation and also open new avenues for further collaboration. So far, we are satisfied with the significant progress in political, economic, educational and cultural areas. But we also do not have the luxury of being complacent.

The annual Summit of the Presidents is the ultimate platform where our common political will is unambiguously expressed at the highest level. So far, each Summit meeting has been convened with a specific theme, such as economic cooperation, culture, education and science, transport and connectivity, and tourism. The theme of our Fifth Summit in Astana is aptly entitled “Media and Information Technologies”.

We, as the Foreign Ministers have also had several formal and informal meetings since the establishment of the Turkic Council, to exchange views on matters of common concern in a constantly changing, ever complex world.

The Turkic Council, as an intergovernmental organization with the overarching aim of promoting comprehensive cooperation among Turkic Speaking States, has undergone a process of growth since its establishment, deepening its expertise and competence. The internal structuring of the Council has been successfully completed and deeper cooperation in many fields among member states has been achieved. The harmonious functioning of the Council of Heads of States, Council of Foreign Ministers, Council of Elders and Senior Officials Committee has enabled the Council to adopt and implement a streamlined agenda. This harmony among different organs constitutes the necessary ground for the project-rich nature of the Council. Turkey has always participated in and contributed to the affiliated organs of the Council. This will continue with ever more vigor.

Moreover, with the establishment of affiliated and related organizations such as TURKPA, TURKSOY, Turkic Business

Council, Turkic Academy, Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, the foundations of the Council have become even stronger.

Intense cooperation among member states on priority topics have already yielded concrete and visible results. Essential areas like economic cooperation and transportation have already gained substantial dynamism with concrete practical projects, supported by the Business Council, formed by the private sectors of the member states.

Indeed, our endeavors over the last five years are just a glimpse of what we are capable of doing in terms of enhanced cooperation.

While celebrating our accomplishments, we should also openly acknowledge that, despite all our hard work, we still have a long way to go to take our cooperation to the next level and ultimately harness our true potential. It is only normal that, coupled with the many opportunities before us, we too have our unique set of challenges. In working towards more meaningful, intense and results-oriented cooperation, we must also acknowledge – and strive to overcome – the obstacles that we together have faced in the past. There is no doubt that in some areas we have achieved rapid success, whereas progress has been less than ideal in some others, and this is not surprising. With common political will and determined implementation, I have no doubt that we will be able to surmount any difficulty that stands in our way.

The Turkic Council’s vision, based on the inherent commonalities between our nations, is totally compatible with the current realities prevailing in Eurasia where rapid economic and political developments are creating opportunities that cannot be

ignored, together with the entrenched challenges that must also be taken seriously.

A decade from now, we must be able to envision a Turkic world which is thriving economically through increased mutual trade based on coordinated and facilitated custom procedures; a visa free region allowing our people to travel and interact with one another as they choose; a new generation, more conscious of their roots and the common culture that binds them together.

Throughout history, Central Asia has been a vital hub of global commerce, an inspiration for fresh ideas as well as a blossoming culture in its own right.

Our long history dating back centuries and the heritage of the Old Silk Road are not just simple memories. They are age-old realities that stand as testament to the inevitability of new and better times to come.

The Turkic Council, without any doubt, is the umbrella under which we come together and work not only for our own future, but also for the whole of Eurasia and thus the World.

On this occasion, my message, our message, has to be clear and simple: As Turkic speaking countries, our brotherhood is eternal, yet we are inclusive. Our journey is long, yet our commitment is strong and history is on our side. Our aim is to not compete but collaborate, to not divide but to bring together, to serve the interests of our nations and our peoples, our region and beyond.

I am confident that this Fifth Summit will constitute another crucial milestone in our collective journey towards ever more cohesion, solidarity and cooperation, as we move forward, together, hand in hand, to a brighter future filled with promise, peace and prosperity for all the nations that constitute the Turkic World.



TURKSOY: THE GLOBAL ACTOR OF CULTURAL COOPERATION IN THE TURKIC WORLD

Prof. Dusen KASEINOV

Secretary General

TURKSOY

The International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), established almost at the same time as the Turkic Republics declared their independence, has now been carrying out its activities for 23 years and has become an efficient, world-wide recognized institution of cultural diplomacy. TURKSOY is a unique international organization. It was established upon common initiative of the Heads of States of Turkic speaking countries to act as the first organization of multilateral cooperation in the Turkic World. The establishment of TURKSOY was primarily based on Turkic languages as the most important common cultural value shared by all Turkic peoples. As such, it is one of the first concrete results of the multilateral cooperation launched by the Heads of States of Turkic speaking countries based on their mutual cultural ties. In just over 20 years, TURKSOY has reached major achievements in the fields of art and culture.

TURKSOY was established on July 12th, 1993 in Almaty upon signature of its founding agreement by the ministers of culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Later, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, as well as the autonomous republics of the Russian Federation, Altai, Bashkortostan, Khakassia, Sakha Yakutia, Tatarstan, Tyva and the autonomous region of Gagauzia, Moldova joined the organization as member states with observer status. Gathering 14 Turkic speaking states and communities under its auspices, TURKSOY is an international organization carrying out activities worldwide. Known as the UNESCO of the Turkic World, TURKSOY also cooperates with international organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, ISESCO and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

As an international organization of culture and art, the aim of TURKSOY is to establish ties of friendship among Turkic

speaking peoples and countries, in order to explore, develop, preserve and transmit the common culture, language, history, art, traditions and customs of Turkic peoples to future generations. The highest decision making body of TURKSOY is its Permanent Council, which is composed of the Ministers of Culture of its member states, and has met 32 times to date, making decisions regarding the harmonization of cultural policies of kindred countries as well as the development of their mutual cooperation in the field of culture. TURKSOY acts as a facilitator of bilateral cooperation among Turkic republics making it possible for the latter to strengthen their ties of multilateral cooperation.

Nevruz is a tradition celebrated by all peoples of Eurasia on March 21st every year. March 21st is the date of the vernal equinox on which day and night are equally long. This date, which marks the beginning of spring, has long had a symbolic meaning for Turkic peoples, so that they consider Nevruz as a common cultural heritage to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Today, the Nevruz feast is undoubtedly regarded as the most important tradition celebrated by all people of the Turkic World.

Every year, TURKSOY carries out Nevruz celebrations with the contribution of hundreds of artists from the Turkic World. It is also upon the initiative of TURKSOY, that March 21st was declared International Nevruz Day by the United Nations.

Reaching beyond the borders of the Turkic World, TURKSOY also held Nevruz celebrations in other countries of the world such as France and Great Britain. Other major venues of these celebrations were the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris

in 2010, the UN General Assembly Hall in Washington in 2011, and Cambridge University in London in 2013. In 2015, TURKSOY also brought the joy of spring to Austria (Vienna) and Germany (Cologne) for the first time. The most significant Nevruz celebration held by TURKSOY in the recent past has undoubtedly been the one that was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO in Paris.

All Nevruz celebrations held by TURKSOY stand as a universal message of peace, calling upon the entire World to unite in peace, reconciliation and solidarity.

Every year, TURKSOY organizes artistic gatherings bringing together photographers, painters, opera singers, poets, journalists, theatre, dance and music ensembles.

Since 1997, nearly 300 artists from 20 countries of the Turkic World have come together in the Painters' Gatherings organized every year. These paintings now make up TURKSOY's colourful paintings' collection, which has been exhibited in nearly 100 cities of 27 different countries including New York, Tehran, Florence and Rabat to promote Turkic art and culture around the globe.

Until now, TURKSOY has held 17 Opera Days, 10 Photographers' Gatherings, 5 Sculptors' Gatherings, 7 Congresses of Literature Journals of the Turkic World, 3 Kashgarly Mahmut Short Story Competitions, and 5 Seminars on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Congress of Literature Journals of the Turkic World is another traditional activity of TURKSOY, and resulted in the establishment of the Union of Authors of the Turkic World,

headed by the Chairman of the Union of Authors of Azerbaijan, Mr. Anar Rızayev.

The Opera Days of TURKSOY, held every year in the TRNC with the contribution of artists from TURKSOY member countries as well as of guest artists from the PRC, Tajikistan and Mongolia, have become the trademark of the TRNC in terms of cultural life.

Alongside its artistic and cultural events, TURKSOY also contributes to academic and scientific activities through its journal, which is published in three languages, and proceedings books for congresses and symposia on literature and social sciences. Since its establishment, TURKSOY has published more than 100 books, featuring selected works by famous authors of the Turkic World.

Artistic gatherings held by TURKSOY have resulted in an increase in the cooperation and exchange of repertoires between the artistic institutions of our member countries. “Birjan and Sara”, the masterpiece of the famous Kazak composer Mukan Tulebayev, whose 100th anniversary was commemorated throughout the year 2013, was performed by artists of the State Opera and Ballet of Samsun and included in the repertoire of Turkish opera houses. In cooperation with local governments, this opera was performed in Istanbul, Bursa, Eskisehir and Ankara. Similarly, another masterpiece of Kazak opera, “Alpamys”, was included in the repertoire of opera houses in Azerbaijan, while the famous opera of the great Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hacibeyli, “Arshyn Mal Alan” was included in the repertoire of opera houses in Kazakhstan. Another example of this fruitful cultural and artistic exchange is the adaptation of

Tshingis Aitmatov’s novel “Mother Earth” to ballet. This ballet, which has now become one of the most popular performances of modern Kyrgyz ballet, has also been included in the repertoire of Turkish ballet. Last but not least, ongoing activities such as the inclusion of one of the most brilliant examples of contemporary Turkish opera, “Ali Baba and the Fourty Thieves,” into the repertoire of Kyrgyzstan, is another example of this fruitful cooperation.

Another new initiative launched by TURKSOY is the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World project. Within the framework of this initiative launched by the Presidents of Turkic Speaking Countries at their 10th Summit in 2010, upon proposal of TURKSOY, one city of the Turkic World is declared as its Cultural Capital every year. Since then, this prestigious title was born by Astana in 2012 followed by Eskisehir in 2013, Kazan in 2014 and Merv in 2015. Within this framework, several cultural and artistic events were held, thus, allowing artists, scholars and intellectuals from all over the World to share their experiences and interact with each other in terms of cultural exchange.

The Cultural Capital of the Turkic World is an initiative which does not only contribute to the enrichment of cultural and artistic life in the selected cities, but also, and more importantly, gives considerable impetus to the process of cultural integration among Turkic republics.

Paying tribute to illustrious personalities of the Turkic World in recognition of their valuable contribution to Turkic culture and introducing them to future generations is a cause to which TURKSOY attaches particular importance.

TURKSOY commemorates the anniversaries of the birthday or death of authors, artists and intellectuals of the Turkic World. Thanks to commemoration events and activities carried out within this framework since 2010, many famous figures of the Turkic World are commemorated and have been introduced to the younger generation.

2015 is dedicated to the commemoration of the Turkish playwright Haldun Taner and the Khakas throat-singer Simion Kadyshv. Through panel discussions, competitions, gatherings of poets and minstrels and concerts as well as publications of books and catalogues, the precious cultural heritage left behind by all these people has been introduced to the younger generations.

The first female composer of the Turkic World and famous personality in Kazakhstan Dina Nurpeyisova, the Kazak poet Kasim Amanjolov, the most brilliant linguist and author of Tatarstan Abdullah Tukay, the first dramaturgist of Azerbaijan Mirza Fatali Ahundzade, the people's poet of Azerbaijan Ahmed Cevad, the People's poet of Kabardino Balkaria Ismail Semenov, the Turkmen philosopher Magtumkuly Pyragy and the first Khakas scholar Nikolay F. Katanov are just a few of the many illustrious figures of the Turkic World commemorated with events realized by TURKSOY.

Leaving indelible traces in the memories of all generations as a source of inspiration and reflecting our spiritual and cultural values, music is a tradition deeply rooted in Turkic culture. Throughout history, talented artists of the Turkic World have contributed to the enrichment of our cultural heritage. Now this tradition is kept alive by our young generations. Based on its commitment to support and promote talented young artists

of the Turkic World, TURKSOY established its Youth Chamber Orchestra in 2010, followed by its Youth Chamber Choir in 2015.

Since its establishment, the Youth Chamber Orchestra of TURKSOY, which aims at the promotion of Turkic music around the World, gave more than 30 solo concerts in key cultural and artistic venues in America, Europe, and Eurasia. The orchestra, composed of artists from 10 countries of the Turkic World, has since its establishment recorded two albums featuring the works by composers of the Turkic World.

Similarly, the Youth Chamber Choir of TURKSOY, established upon decision of the Permanent Council of Ministers of Culture of Turkic Speaking Countries at its 32nd term meeting, participated in the Second European Choir Games held in Magdeburg, where it was awarded three gold medals in three different categories. The choir, which is currently composed of talented young artists selected among young musicians from famous conservatories of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Tatarstan (RF), is expected to grow larger with the contribution of students from other countries of the Turkic World.

Every year, TURKSOY hands over its Press Awards to journalists and members of the Press media in recognition of their contribution to the promotion of Turkic culture worldwide as well as to the building of cultural bridges among various countries of the globe.

Since the beginning of this initiative launched by TURKSOY, 100 journalists from 20 countries have received this award especially prepared under the motto "Unity

for Strength and Solidarity” at the opening ceremony of commemorative years annually declared by TURKSOY.

Indeed, just as legislative, executive and judiciary powers are essential pillars of a government, the media also plays a key role, not only in terms of the promotion of cultural and traditional values of a country, but also in terms of intercultural communication, which can only take place via a common platform of information. Journalists and members of the press media are vital players in increasing the worldwide visibility and presence of our rich cultural heritage dating back thousands of years. This is why we offer our Award of the Press to journalists of the Turkic World to honour them as key actors of a common understanding of our unity and solidarity.

TURKSOY works in coordination with the Turkic Council, the Turkic Academy and the Foundation of Turkic Culture and Heritage. On a global scale, TURKSOY cooperates with UNESCO, ISESCO, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

As an international organization, TURKSOY works in close cooperation with local governments, universities and NGOs with the support of the ministries of culture of its member countries. Projects such as the Workshop on Traditional Turkic Music and the “Symposium on Traditional Music of the Turkic World” hosted by MIAM and organized by TURKSOY in cooperation with Cambridge University and the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) are the most recent examples of such cooperation activities. Upon the initiative of TURKSOY, the 43rd World Conference of the International Council of Traditional Music, hosted by the State Conservatory of

Kazakhstan, took place in Almaty in 2015. As one of the most respected forums of the world in the field of traditional music, this event gathered more than 600 scholars, musicians and teachers from 70 countries, thus introducing our rich heritage of traditional music to the world.

As a result of its fruitful cooperation with the International Society for Music Education (ISME) and the Association of Music Teachers of Turkey (MUZED), TURKSOY established the Association of Music Education of the Turkic World.

Founded by the Ministers of Culture of Turkic Republics, TURKSOY has been carrying out wide-scope activities to strengthen common cultural ties among Turkic peoples and to promote Turkic culture worldwide since 1993.

TURKSOY is an international organization under the auspices of which theatres, operas, museums, libraries, authors’ unions and fine arts’ institutions of Turkic states realize various cultural and artistic projects together.

Rooted in a solid conviction, and carried out with great self-devotion, TURKSOY’s activities should be seen as the successful result of our joint commitment to achieve common goals. Indeed, each activity carried out by TURKSOY is equally precious, because our brotherhood and our common cultural ties are all a modest contribution to the history of humanity.

In the coming years as well, TURKSOY will continue playing a key role in the process of cultural integration and take new initiatives under the precious leadership of the Heads of States of its member countries.



TURKPA: THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION OF THE COOPERATION AMONG TURKIC COUNTRIES

Jandos ASANOV
Secretary General
TurkPA

TurkPA is the parliamentary dimension of the cooperation and integration among Turkic countries. It was established in 2008 on the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The Assembly is engaged in expanding the legislative framework of this integration. TurkPA, as one of its affiliated organizations, closely cooperates with the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking states (Turkic Council) in order to shape a joint pattern for economic, political and cultural cooperation among Turkic states. As the parliamentary dimension of Turkic cooperation, TurkPA is committed to providing legislative support of the activities and undertakings initiated within the framework of the Turkic Council. There is one agenda for Turkic cooperation, which is set by the heads of states and more coordinated actions among these two main structures will ensure integrity of interaction within the format of Turkic cooperation.

It is not by coincidence that our Secretariat, which started its activities in 2010, is located in Azerbaijan. The first Turkic parliamentary republic in history, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, was born here in 1918. Albeit short-lived, the ADR has left a lasting legacy in the Turkic world.

TurkPA has a great potential, since it is composed of the chairs and members of the four parliaments. It covers a wide range of issues relating to trade and investment, the transport and hydrocarbons sectors, culture and education. Last year in Baku at the 5th plenary session of TurkPA a commission on environmental protection and mineral resources was set up. Currently the TurkPA countries are busy with implementation of many “green energy” projects; solar, wind and other types of renewable energy sources are on the rise in our countries, and environmentally-friendly technologies are being introduced into

our economies. EXPO-2017, to be held in Astana, is dedicated to the development of renewable energy sources.

What do we have in transport? Turkey at the end of 2013 commissioned its Marmaray railway project, Kazakhstan last year completed the construction of a 1,100 kilometer long railway that connects Central Kazakhstan with the west of the country, reaching the Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan is also about to commission its part, almost 2,800 kilometers, of the transnational Western China – Western Europe highway. We are expecting the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. All these mean that through our countries there will be operating a huge long-distance railway that connects the Atlantic with the Pacific. The task of TurkPA here is to give a comprehensive and up-to-date legislative backing to these undertakings.

What can be done in the sphere of education, culture and humanitarian links? We lack down-to-earth, practical things. We lack professional interpreters who can carry out qualified translations from one Turkic language into another Turkic language. For this we need to introduce at relevant universities a discipline on translation techniques, we need scientific research and diploma works, we need dictionaries, for example Kazakh-Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz-Turkish, and educational materials to learn our languages. That is why TurkPA has held seminars dedicated to the above mentioned issues in cooperation with the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in Bishkek and the Kazakh-Turkish International University in Turkestan.

Without the institution of qualified translators it is difficult to exchange information among our countries. We know better

of what is going on elsewhere than in our countries. In the coming years we need to tackle this issue and create channels of information exchange between the countries. In this regard TurkPA has already carried out necessary studies and made relevant recommendations to our governments. As mentioned above, tackling of this issue will boost the flow of information among the member states, thus contributing to the realization of the proposal by President Nursultan Nazarbayev on strengthening the mass media in the Turkic world.

TurkPA, as the parliamentary dimension of cooperation among the Turkic speaking states, is going through the stage of conceptualisation and widening the scope of its activities. Thus, since 2014 our Assembly has initiated a process of expert consultations in various fields of cooperation in order to contribute to exchange of experience and development of practical dialogue among the four member countries. The regular expert meetings and other events that are held under the aegis of TurkPA show that this institution yields capacity to facilitate creative legislative work in the member-states in various fields.

Recently, issues related to the fight against corruption and to good governance have been under the focus of TurkPA, and the Turkish and Azerbaijani chairmanships of TurkPA hosted roundtables with the participation of legislative experts of the member countries.

TurkPA has started holding joint meetings of the specialized parliamentary committees of the four member-countries. In 2014 two meetings of the committees of the member parliaments that deal with social issues and healthcare were hosted under the aegis of the

TurkPA chairmanships. These meetings, first of all, aim to develop a wider exchange of parliamentary experience and sharing of best practices among the member countries and, as a next stage, will pave the way for defining priority aspects of new fields of cooperation within TurkPA's framework.

The newly established TurkPA Commission on Environmental Protection and Mineral Resources have identified some important areas. Here priority issues for the member-states are the rational use of water resources, fighting against desertification, and development of green technologies and renewable energy sources. EXPO-2017 in Astana will be dedicated to renewable energy, therefore TurkPA currently is expected to hold numerous events dedicated to EXPO-2017. We also have plans to hold in the coming months a legislative experts' seminar dedicated to the fight against desertification in cooperation with the Centre for the Fight against Desertification in Konya, Turkey as well as a seminar on protection of glaciers in cooperation with the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of Kyrgyzstan.

International cooperation with TurkPA is also advancing. In 2014, at the 5th Plenary Session of TurkPA, the Republic of Hungary joined our organisation in the capacity of an observer. As is known, the Hungarian nation has had in its history quite lengthy spells of coexisting and mutual cultural exchange with Turkic peoples. The current strategy of the Hungarian government titled as the Eastern Opening also facilitates dialogue and cooperation among Hungary and Turkic-speaking countries. That is why TurkPA has favourably considered the application of the Hungarian National Assembly to become an observer in TurkPA. In March of

this year, I paid a working visit to Budapest and discussed with high-ranking representatives of the Hungarian Parliament the prospects of cooperation between TurkPA and Hungary. We met also with officials of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry and touched upon the main aspects of the policy of Eastern Opening being pursued by the current Hungarian government.

Since last year interaction between TurkPA and the International Organisation for Migration was initiated and the second joint meeting of the parliamentary committees that deal with social issues and healthcare was dedicated to migration issues in the member countries, for TurkPA states can be regarded both as origin and recipient countries. Furthermore, TurkPA and IOM are conducting deliberations on future joint projects.

This year TurkPA started cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Membership of Azerbaijan and Turkey in PACE and participation of Kyrgyzstan in PACE activities with the status of a Partner for Democracy provides us with opportunities for constructive interaction. Thus, in March a seminar on transparency and accountability of elected bodies was organized in Istanbul by PACE in cooperation with TurkPA. PACE representatives were also informed about TurkPA's activities on addressing the issues of good governance and the role of parliaments in the fight against corruption. The second event was an international conference dedicated to the issues of migration in Central Asia, held in Bishkek under the auspices of the Kyrgyz Parliament jointly with PACE. I had the privilege to take part as a moderator in this conference held on 2-3 June in Bishkek and

to discuss current migration challenges in the region with the leadership of the Kyrgyz Parliament, high-ranking representatives of the PACE, IOM and UN.

Undoubtedly, we place particular emphasis on developing cooperation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. This year in May our delegation visited the OSCEPA Secretariat in Copenhagen, where meetings with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and his staff were held and prospects of cooperation were discussed.

TurkPA also maintains relations with the OSCE. On 23rd July, 2015 the TurkPA Secretary General on the invitation of the Serbian chairmanship of the OSCE visited Vienna and made a speech at the Permanent Council of the OSCE.

TurkPA is also involved in the election monitoring of the member countries. After presidential elections in Turkey in 2014 TurkPA observers conducted monitoring of early presidential elections in Kazakhstan and parliamentary elections in Turkey this year, and we are looking forward to the parliamentary elections to be held in the autumn in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. Since 2010 TurkPA observers' missions have monitored presidential and parliamentary elections in the four member countries and such an activity has contributed to the fruitful exchange of views as regards issues relating to the improvement of electoral laws and conduct of the entire election process and its administration. Election monitoring under the aegis of TurkPA is based on the principles of transparency, fairness and respect to the national legislation of the member countries. Our observers traditionally conduct short-

term monitoring of election processes, hold meetings with relevant national authorities, assess the regulatory framework for elections, and visit the polling stations in order to get acquainted with the situation on the ground on election day.

Moreover, the TurkPA Commission on Legal Issues and International Cooperation dedicated its meeting held in April in Bishkek to issues relating to the standards of electoral laws and election observation.

The first ever European Games, held in Baku from 12-28 June this year, to which TurkPA had lent its moral support, was a huge achievement. First of all it was a grand and beautiful sportive event on a global scale; secondly, it helped further consolidate friendship and interaction among the sports communities in Europe. The Games brought together more than 6,000 European athletes, and competitions were held at newly built state-of-the-art sports venues. The guests also had the opportunity to have a look at the rich cultural and historic legacy of the host country.

The European Games were an outstanding event not only for Azerbaijan and European sports, but also for the entire Turkic world. These games embodied the Turkic spirit and nature of Turks. Stretched between the Pacific and the Atlantic, the Turkic people practice various religions: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, and Tengrian beliefs, they have rich racial and cultural appearances and features. It is very pleasing that one of the founding members of TurkPA could cope with such an enormous task and noble undertaking within a short span of time.



INTERNATIONAL TURKIC ACADEMY: A NEW PLATFORM FOR INTELLECTUAL COOPERATION IN EURASIA

Prof. Darkhan KYDYRALI

President

International Turkic Academy

The Turkic world is an integral and indispensable part of the Eurasian domain. Turkic civilization, having for centuries bridged the East and the West, the North and the South, has contributed vastly to the development of human history. But, as Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun put it brilliantly, every civilization experiences rises and downfalls. If Turkic peoples reached the pinnacle of fame in the 16th century when formidable dynasties and states of Turkic extraction came to dominate the Afro-Eurasian geography, it was also the start of their degeneration.

Divided and subdued in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Turkic peoples regained their independence at the turn of the century 100 years later. Thus, with the reemergence of several sovereign Turkic states on the political map of the world, came true the dreams of Ismail Gaspirali, Ali bey Huseynzade, Mustafa Shokay, Zeki Velidi Togan, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Immediately, Turkic cooperation began developing through various fora and projects, including the summits of Heads of state. But the turning point of Turkic cooperation, undoubtedly, was the signing of the historic Nakhchivan Agreement on October 3, 2009 and the establishment of the Turkic Council.

If we are to draw lessons from the past and build our future accordingly, then it is of great significance to put high emphasis on increasing commonality and bolstering unity among Turkic peoples. Doubtless, a first step towards integration should start from ideological cohesion, which in turn calls for consistent intellectual interaction and scholarly collaboration.

At the 9th Summit of the Heads of Turkic Speaking States held in Nakhchivan on October 3, 2009, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that the Turkic world had not been fully and properly researched and there-

fore it was “necessary to found a center for study of history and culture of the Turkic peoples and for coordinating the systems of education”. That’s because “our great ancestors ruled over the Great Steppe from Altai to the White Sea. They left us the epic tradition of heroism and the rich spiritual heritage. They made great contributions to global civilization including the yurt, using iron, wide trousers, arrows, high boots, heels, and stirrups. It appears that the time has come to introduce this heritage to the international community. That is why we need to establish the Turkic Academy which will be common to all”. He then proposed to locate the Academy in the capital of Kazakhstan. The Nakhichevan Agreement that was signed on the same day amid giving impetus to the unity of Turkic countries in general, underlined the goals and objectives of the future Academy in particular. One of the objectives outlined in its second article reads: “to develop cooperation in the sphere of popularization of science and technology, education, public health, culture, sport and tourism, great cultural and historical heritage of the Turkic peoples; use the means of mass media with the aim of popularization of the great cultural and historical heritage of the Turkic people”.

At the outset, the Turkic Academy was established as a national institution of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2010. The institution was officially opened by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Turkish President Abdullah Gül on May 28, 2010 in Astana in the presence of prominent scholars of Turkology from Kazakhstan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States. During the opening ceremony, Nazarbayev

said that the Turkic Academy was “the first and unique research center of its kind in the Turkic world. It will be the center for strengthening cultural and social relations among the Turkic countries”.

At the 2nd Summit of the Turkic Council, held on August 22-23, 2012 in Bishkek and attended by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic Almazbek Atambayev, President of the Republic of Turkey Abdullah Gül, and Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Artur Rasizade, the governments of these four states signed the Agreement on the Establishment of the Turkic Academy as an international organization. Following the ratification of the Agreement by the National Parliaments, the Turkic Academy attained the status of an international organization on August 27, 2014 and has been functioning as such ever since.

As one of the core objectives of the Academy is to integrate the endeavors of scholars of the Turkic world and accelerate their participation in joint scholarly projects, it was equipped with a library and museum from the outset. Yet, the acquisition of personal libraries of prominent scholars of Turkology subsequently, was among a set of initiatives taken to create suitable conditions for the conduct of research at its headquarters. Doubtless, the enrichment of the library by the personal collections has quickly reinforced the Academy’s position as a unique center for Turkic studies in the region. Highly-reputed scholars based outside Kazakhstan, yet with academic interests directly related to the Turkic civilization started to regularly visit the library of the Academy and pore over old and new books and manu-

scripts written in various languages, including Hungarian and Mongolian.

Likewise, the museum of the Academy, with highly prized artifacts in its possession, has repeatedly undergone renovation and enhancement in the last few months. It was augmented by personal collections that reach 240 exhibits. Still, the stock of the museum is liable to further amplification by the findings of the archeological studies undertaken in the framework of research funds allocated from the Academy's coffers. For instance, on 18-20 July 2014, as a result of the archaeological excavations carried out by the prominent scientist and archaeologist Prof. Dr. Samashev, an ancient warrior was found on the territory of Kazakh Altai. Preliminary examinations also found weapons (bow, arrows, quiver, sabre) and the remains of a horse. Moreover, archeologists came across an exceptional musical instrument that resembles the modern kobyz and this proved to be the most notable discovery. The Academy made a replica of the ancient Turkic kobyz and will make it public in the near future.

Although Turkic peoples have made a remarkable impact on the political and social landscape of the world, which is evident in the rise of numerous dynasties and states in the vast geography stretching from Siberia to India, from Eastern Turkistan to Western Africa, to date they had limited capacity to pen their history from their own perspective. It is thanks to the numerical surge of independent Turkic states since the 1990s that scholars acquired a rare opportunity to revisit the past and sketch out indigenous historical transformations more coherently. Still, due to a number of political and economic impediments, scientific integration of

the Turkic states has been recurrently postponed along with other vital issues. Therefore, immediately after the establishment of the International Turkic Academy, the preparation of a common history textbook came to the fore. At the 2nd Summit of the Turkic Council, held on August 23, 2012 in Bishkek, Heads of State agreed on the need of preparing a book of "Common Turkic History" to be taught in 8th grade at the schools of Member States. The Academy took on the project and came up with its draft version, which was then dispatched to the responsible outfits in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey so as to receive their timely feedback and corrections. As a result of a relatively broad and mutually obliging study, the textbook on the common history of the Turkic world came into existence by mid-2015. Although it will be brought to further sophistication, its contours are in place and do enjoy the joint endorsement of scholars based in Turkic-speaking states.

In view of the fact that politico-economic and socio-cultural integration of Turkic states would constantly bring forward novel challenges and spark dire discourses touching on crucial concerns of both public and private importance, a wide range of research efforts need to be initiated from the outset. Such a grand enterprise could not be well-designed and successfully implemented unless the scientific institutions of the Member States come to work in unison. In the Declaration of the 2nd Summit of the Turkic Council, held on August 23, 2012 in Bishkek, Heads of State drew special attention to the development of broad cooperation in the field of science and education through the creation of common structures. Moreover, Ministers of Education of the Turkic Council, at their Third Meeting held in

Baku on 28 November 2014, gave the International Turkic Academy, the main center of coordination in the Turkic world, the authority to establish the Union of National Academies of Sciences of Turkic World. The Union was set up on 29 June 2015, with the International Turkic Academy functioning as its Secretariat. Empowered to utilize the facilities of the National Academies of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, the Union is on its way to launch large-scale research studies coalescing further the intellectual potential of the Turkic world.

Rigorous efforts of the Academy to become a regional hub for intellectual cooperation and its attempt to develop mutually beneficial ties with leading research centers facilitated its admission to the International Union of Academies, which is based in Brussels, in May 2015. Considering that no Central Asian research outfit has ever been offered a membership in this high-profile organization up to the present time, this can duly be regarded as an outstanding recognition of the Academy's endeavors. Indeed, in a short span of time, the International Turkic Academy rose to prominence in the Eurasian space. So far, around 30 memorandums have been signed with well-established research institutions and universities, including the Institute of Literature of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, the National Library of the Kyrgyz Republic, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan, the Academy of Sciences of Hungary, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, the International institute for the study of Nomadic Civilizations (Mongolia), the Ufa scientific center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian State

University for the Humanities, the International Research Center for Islamic History, Culture and Art (IRCICA), etc.

Amid the avalanche of events taken on by the Academy in recent months, it suffices to count just a few to manifest the overall efforts directed toward increasing the popularity of the Turkic civilization. On 15 April 2015, for instance, the International Turkic Academy successfully embarked on a major event of the year – an international forum *“Korkut's legacy and the Turkic world”* held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, which was attended by the Secretary of State of Kazakhstan G. Abdykalykova, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Elchin Afandiyev and other leading figures and scholars from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. While this enterprise brought the Academy into the limelight and expanded its scope of operation, a session organized in the framework of the VIII Astana Economic Forum titled as the “Caspian Transit Corridor” solidified its international reach and focus on social and economic studies.

In addition to large-scale events organized in the name of reviving and strengthening the notion of the Turkic world, some 50 books have been published by the Academy over the last four years to fill its content. They cover a wide range of issues including Turkic history, culture, art, as well as social and economic issues of the Turkic countries. The Academy also publishes scientific and analytical journals in four languages (Kazakh, Turkish, English and Russian), such as “Altaistics and Turkology” and “Global-Turk” While the former covers scientific articles on the key broader issues of Turkology, and more broadly, Altaistics, the latter issues articles discussing the current

socio-economic situation in the Turkic world and beyond. Moreover, in the last year, more than 1,500 information and expert materials concerning the Turkic Academy were published on TV, web portals, websites of news agencies, radio and in periodicals of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Hungary, etc.

All the efforts of the Turkic states to minimize differences and increase commonality from the early 1990s has ultimately culminated in the emergence of international bodies in charge of integrating the Turkic world in a more systematic way. The Academy is one of these bodies responsible for creating an intellectual platform that brings forward the most pressing issues and seeks to come up with their solutions by engaging the scholarly potential of participat-

ing countries. In a short span of time, the Academy has profoundly demonstrated its capacity to become the loadstar of research institutions in the Turkic states. It is my contention that in the coming years it will generate high-quality research to impact the decision-making processes in the Turkic states and beyond.

Nurtured by the humanist philosophies of Rumi, Yunus Emre, Fuzuli, and Magtymguly Pyragy, Turkic culture propagated love toward humankind and contributed greatly to universal common values. Turkic thought and ethos strengthened human brotherhood. The functioning of the International Turkic Academy, which is entrusted with research and promotion of this rich heritage, will be closely related to the peoples of the Eurasian domain.



COOPERATION BETWEEN TURKIC SPEAKING COUNTRIES AS ONE OF THE FACTORS STRENGTHENING UNITY OF THE TURKIC WORLD

Gunay AFANDIYEVA

President

Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation

As the members of the 21st century world, we are currently witnessing intense conflicts, political cataclysms and dynamic changes. Millions of people around the world are affected by terrorism, violence, poverty and other pressing challenges, and mobilize vast efforts and resources to reach prosperity. Some people are forced to flee their native lands and live as refugees or internally displaced persons. They thereby lose touch with their historic roots, national and spiritual values.

Although history had separated the Turkic-speaking nations, today they have joined together for strength and support. In this respect, international organizations founded by Turkic-speaking countries fulfill essential functions: consolidation of the historic and spiritual bonds to the roots and preservation of the unity of friendly Turkic nations.

Many international organizations today enable expanded cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries in different areas. Currently, Turkic-speaking countries work jointly within the framework of the Turkic Council, TURKSOY, the International Turkic Academy and other international bodies.

At the same time, recent years have seen a larger cooperation between states in our region based on mutual trust. Warm and cordial relations between the National leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, and former President of the Republic of Turkey, Suleyman Demirel, encouraged closeness between the two states and, as a result, an extensive cooperation leading to progress and mutual goals was founded. International energy projects initiated by Azerbaijan played a crucial role in fostering and ensuring economic cooperation. The BTC oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-

Erzurum gas pipeline, as well as the TAP and TANAP gas projects, which will soon be realized, serve the economic interests of the regional states, and essentially connect Turkic-speaking countries. In the future, by joining these projects, Kazakhstan and other Turkic-speaking countries will further strengthen the solidarity between our friendly countries. Among the successful initiatives helping to bring regional states closer we may also mention the Silk Road Project and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.

We may therefore conclude that the establishment of organizations with a dedicated focus on Turkic-speaking countries will support regional development and strengthen unity and friendship between our nations. These organizations do not essentially call for political unity between the states of the region. They embrace cultural development, strengthening of the bonds to our historical roots, preservation of national and spiritual values, and economic progress. The biggest step in the direction of the approximation of Turkic-speaking nations and consolidation of brotherly relations among them should hence begin from cultural development, identification of common cultural values, and the preservation and transmission of these values to future generations.

Turkic nations share a rich history, traditions, literature and art which are very similar. This similarity expresses the spiritual solidarity of our nations and illustrates common past and roots. For example, the art of “Ashiq” in Azerbaijan, the art of “Meddah” in Turkey, and the art of “Akin” in Kyrgyzstan promote similar ideas to artistic details and national elements. The “Tar” in Azerbaijan and the traditional art of “Dombra Kuy” in Kazakhstan demonstrate similar charac-

teristics between our musical instruments. Famous writers like Najib Fazil Kisakurek, Ahmad Javad, and Chingiz Aitmatov wrote great works of literature on Turkism and bonds to the roots. The holiday of Novruz, celebrated for centuries, and the epic of Koroghlu, also symbolize our common spiritual heritage. The main idea in the Kyrgyz “Manas”, “Semetey”, “Seytek” epic trilogy, the unification of scattered tribes into one nation, is also found in the epos of “Kitabi-DedeGorgud”. Yet each of these epics represents a unique plot line and original value. The ideas of multiculturalism and tolerance described in the “Manas”, “Semetey” and “Seytek” epics are important issues facing the Turkic world and the world in general. The fact that Azerbaijan hosts World Forums on Intercultural Dialogues and the Baku International Humanitarian Forums is indicative of the importance that the Turkic nations give to the values found in those epics. Above all, these ideas become a guide for life for young generations and gain practical significance through such forums.

In Azerbaijan, the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, UNESCO and ISESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva’s contributions to the support of the cultural progress, preservation and transmission of national and spiritual values to future generations, as well as practices of traditions are invaluable and should encourage Turkic-speaking organizations to launch similar charity initiatives.

The newly-established Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation is comprised of four brotherly Turkic countries, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. Besides the four founding states, other Turkic countries of the region are equally im-

portant for Turkic unity. I'm confident that these countries will also become part of the Foundation in the future. The international experience demonstrates that if international and regional organizations are successful, their borders can be expanded and their fields can be extended to embrace economic, political, social, humanitarian and other spheres. These are important factors. The international experience convinces us that success defines the future expansion of an organization.

The Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, by supporting cooperation among the Turkic peoples in the priority areas such as culture, heritage, literature, language, education, science, information and communication, tourism and others, can become one of the largest platforms of cooperation among the Turkic peoples in the future. Turkic peoples share a common rich past, history, culture, traditions and national-spiritual values. They represent the greatest common treasure of the Turkic people. Protecting and passing to the future generations this treasure by further enriching it should constitute the basis of the operating principles of the Foundation.

The Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, based on the common values shared by the Turkic peoples can play a major role in ensuring their unity, equality and solidarity. The common traditions and intangible heritage of Turkic peoples are among the main factors that characterize their identity. As is known, the preservation of these qualities is important for ensuring the unity of the Turkic peoples. At the same time, we frequently face cases of misappropriation of the heritage which belongs to other nationalities. Attempts of physical and spiritual misappropriation of the heritage of the Turkic world

have become more widespread in recent decades. In order to prevent such attempts, it is of utmost importance to act together with the states having common values and heritage, to ensure their support, to take preventive measures in connection with the heritage facing the threat of expropriation, and to promote this heritage. While fighting against such cases, defining a common position by joining forces of the Turkic-speaking countries will have more effective results. In this regard, I believe the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, focusing on such issues, can contribute to the protection of cultural values of brotherly Turkic people.

Common spiritual and moral values create bridges between the peoples. Supporting cultural innovations in literature, art, music and other areas, as well as promoting and encouraging them undoubtedly further strengthen bilateral relations among the states and the nations. In this regard, the goals set by the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation can have significant cultural achievements in the region strengthening solidarity among Turkic peoples.

Thus, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, cooperating with other international organizations and institutions such as TURKSOY, UNESCO, ISESCO, etc. will serve the rapprochement and unity of the Turkic peoples not only in the cultural field, but also in the tourism, science, education, and humanitarian sectors through a wide range of supported projects.

In general, other Turkic organizations which currently operate have made significant achievements in the establishment of cultural cooperation among Turkic peoples. Turkic-speaking countries have already ad-

opted a common flag, and the issue of the adoption of a common language and alphabet is in process. Establishment of the International Turkic TV Channel by the initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan is playing an important role in the history of Turkish-speaking countries as a successful step. The Council of Elders and the Turkic Academy as the other organizations operating within the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking Countries are making a significant contribution to the rapprochement and friendship of these countries.

As one of the successful initiatives which is bringing our peoples closer, the First Meeting of the Official Research Foreign Policy Centers of the Member States of the Turkic Council held on May 8, 2015, laid the foundation for the coordination of the activities of the foreign policy research centers of the Turkic-speaking countries. This can be considered as a very important event for the future of the Turkic world. The strategic research centers fulfill the function of being the brain centers of these countries. The subjects studied, researches carried out, and reports prepared are providing a professional and scientific approach to the international processes within and outside the country. Most importantly, these centers are operating in collaboration with other government agencies to determine domestic and foreign

policy strategies of the states. No doubt, the coordination of strategic research centers will contribute to further strengthening relations among the Turkic-speaking countries, determining common strategies, political forecasts and conceptual approaches in this direction.

It is a well known fact that a number of cultural monuments in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the surrounding territories of Azerbaijan have been destroyed, while there is no information on many others. Although these monuments legally belong to Azerbaijan, in fact, they are the common heritage of the Turkic world, the vestiges of our shared history. Therefore, we consider the adoption of the common strategy on the protection of the cultural monuments destroyed and under the risk of destruction in Karabakh, delivering the realities to the world community through strategic and scientific research centers, as well as the Turkic-speaking organizations, to be of great importance for the Turkic world.

Of course, if we keep to the guiding principle of the famous “Strength is in unity” , we can ensure the greatest desire of Gorgud-Ata from the common heritage of the Turkic world “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud” – living in peace and prosperity of Turkic nations, also this unity can become the guarantee of a bright future for the Turkic world.



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TURKIC COUNCIL THINK TANKS NETWORK: A MAJOR STEP FORWARD

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The Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM), together with its partners, has been working towards the establishment of a network of official foreign policy research centers of the Member States of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States for several years. With the support and coordination of the Secretariat of the Turkic Council, a meeting of the think tanks was convened in Baku on May 8, 2015, which was a major step towards the establishment of a common network. At the meeting, the official foreign policy research centers of the Turkic Council member countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding, in which they declared their commitment to the establishment of the mentioned network and realization of joint projects aimed at deepening cooperation among the Turkic speaking countries, advancing their economy and security, and increasing the well-being of Turkic speaking nations.

Azerbaijan has always attached great importance to Turkic solidarity. The President of Azerbaijan has been continuously stressing that the cooperation within the framework of the Turkic Council is an important component of Azerbaijan's foreign policy and is based on historical, linguistic and cultural basis. It is no coincidence that the decision to establish the Turkic Council was made in Azerbaijan's ancient city of Nakhchivan. The Turkic Council is an integrative structure. Numerous summits of Heads of States take place under its auspices, representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries, as well as various ministries, and non-governmental organizations are successfully cooperating within this framework, and cultural events are taking place with its support. It is in this context that the cooperation among the official research foreign policy centers becomes of high strategic importance.

In the last 8 years, SAM has signed memorandums of cooperation with its partners from the member countries of the Turkic Council and has established effective cooperation with them. However, the signing of the memorandum under the auspices of the Secretariat of the Turkic Council opens up new possibilities for our institutions to implement joint projects and to realize their mission of developing and deepening the integrative project. It is therefore absolutely necessary to synchronize the work of the think tanks with the policies and current challenges of the Turkic Council.

The Turkic Council has become an important actor in the processes that take place on the Eurasian continent where numerous scenarios of economic and military-political integration are being carried out. The geopolitical power centers initiate platforms that open new opportunities for our countries. Being often in conflict with each other, these initiatives may create an atmosphere of competition and confrontation. Our countries are represented in various economic and military-political blocs in accordance with their national interests. As part of the tension created between these blocs, Turkic countries demonstrate a rare example of peace and cooperation. In this context, we need to deepen this cooperation and thereby contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in different regions of the continent. Our location in the heart of Eurasia presents us with both the opportunities for development, as well as with the threat of turning into the battle space and the object of geopolitical contradictions. Our membership in the Turkic Council creates conditions for strengthening our countries' independence, as well as for stable identity formation and alternative approaches to the challenges of our time. Turkic solidarity forms the trend of

development in the region, and contributes to an element of interdependence in economic development with the latter being the basis of constructive dialogue and effective cooperation, problem solving and creating conditions for future development.

In this context, the Silk Road Economic Belt project, which is to acquire specific landmarks in the nearest future should be particularly emphasized. The large-scale infrastructure projects that are being implemented in the territory of the Turkic Council member states will bring our countries closer together. The member states have an opportunity to become the main passage route for the project and to turn into a trade hub between China and the EU, the Central Asia and the Black Sea regions. We ourselves have to choose whether we would perform as consumers and objects of geoeconomic and geopolitical projects or become equal partners to the upcoming projects and development trends that take place on the continent.

In the modern world think tanks have acquired every-growing importance in public policy decision making at the national and international levels via providing strategic insights and practical recommendations for policy-makers, as well as serving as a reliable source of information and analysis on political, economic, security and development issues. Establishment of a network of official research foreign policy centers of the Member States of the Turkic Council and realization of joint projects will contribute to the think tanks' capabilities and give them an opportunity to jointly analyze the potential opportunities and threats facing Turkic speaking countries, to form the scientific literature about the purpose and potential of the Turkic Council for foreign experts and to spread information about the organization in the international arena.



THE EVOLUTION OF TURKIC INTEGRATION: AN INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INTERSTATE RELATIONS

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The first Summit of Heads of the Turkic Speaking States, held on October 30-31, 1992 in Ankara, catalyzed the development of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation in a number of spheres. The current multilateral relations among the Turkic speaking nations offer opportunities for economic cooperation and integration, promote the formation of political and diplomatic ties, and create a basis for deeper cultural interactions. The establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (the Turkic Council) in 2009 in Nakhchivan became the turning point in providing a new institutional foundation to these states' relations.

The integrating role of the Turkic Council is constantly increasing; the Council deals with strategic questions and addresses a wide range of issues in such areas as strengthening of economic relations and promotion of closer relations in the scientific and cultural fields.

The following table provides an overview of the summits held from 2011 to 2014 and shows that the Turkic speaking countries are oriented towards a gradual enhancement of their long-term cooperation. The agendas of the summits reveal the diverse content of the cooperation among the Turkic speaking countries; a cooperation that provides a good basis for further strengthening of their relations.

Table 1. Turkic Council Summits (2011-2014)

№	Date and venue	Agenda	Outcome
1	October 21 2011, Almaty	Trade, economic, and humanitarian cooperation.	The delegates resolved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to establish the Cultural Fund of the Turkic Speaking States in Baku; - to issue the “Turkic World” annual review.
2	August 23 2012, Bishkek	Cooperation in education, science and culture.	The delegates signed the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreement on the Financial Rules of the Secretariat of the Turkic Council - Agreement on Establishment of the Turkic Academy; - Charter of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation.
3	August 16 2013, Gabala	Maintenance of regional security; cooperation in transport and communication; simplification of the customs procedures.	The delegates signed the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declaration of the Summit; - Declaration on the Extension of the Secretary Term of Office.
4	June 5 2014, Bodrum	Cooperation in the sphere of tourism.	The delegates resolved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to establish a number of centers to support Turkic-speaking diasporas; - to establish a single Turkic TV; - to start a working group on tourism.

Apart from the Turkic Council, the work of the other institutions signifies that the relations and cooperation among the Turkic speaking states is strengthening. This year alone, the following measures has been taken to further enhance the cooperation of the Turkic speaking nations:

Firstly, the IV World Forum of the Turkic Peoples was held on April 23-25, 2015 in Istanbul. The participants discussed the issues of expansion and enhancement of the ties in the field of information. Additionally, there was the Red Apple Awarding Ceremony to celebrate the most outstanding achievements in diplomacy, business, science, RTD, culture and sports.

Secondly, the heads of the institutes of strategic studies of the Turkic Council member states met on May 9, 2015 in Baku and signed the Memorandum of Understanding stipulating for closer and deeper cooperation. This event opened a new stage of cooperation between the think tanks of the Turkic states, which will enable the expert communities to reach a higher level of collaboration.

Thirdly, the 9th Meeting of the Council of Elders of Turkic Speaking States was held on August 6, 2015 in Gabala. The delegates discussed, among other things, issues concerning the International Turkic Academy, a draft school curriculum on the History of the Turks, the conceptual foundation of the Turkic integration, and a geography book joint project.

Fourthly, on August 18, 2015, Astana hosted the first meeting of the Ministers of Information of the Turkic Council member states where the basic concept and the draft project of a single Turkic TV channel were developed.

In this context, the initiatives articulated and promoted by President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan are worth special mention, as they have been significant for the formation and development of the institutional basis of the Turkic cooperation:

On April 8, 2000 at the VIII Summit of the Heads of States of Turkic Speaking States in Baku, President Nursultan Nazarbayev initiated the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Speaking States, whose work should be complemented by the Council of Elders that would comprise the most reputable and prominent political, public, and cultural figures of the Turkic world. Eventually, the idea was implemented; the Parliamentary Assembly (TURKPA) was established on 20 November 2008 with the Istanbul Agreement, which was signed by the chairmen of the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

On October 3, 2009, at the IX Summit, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan initiated the opening of a research center that will study the history of the Turkic world and the role and place of the Turkic civilization. On 25 May 2010, the International Turkic Academy was established in Astana as an intellectual center of the Turkic Council. Currently, on the request of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the scholarly potential of the International Turkic Academy is focused on finding coherent and comprehensive conceptual foundations for Turkic integration.

On June 5, 2014 at the IV Summit, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan articulated the idea of establishing a single Turkic television channel that would be an information resource to introduce the Turkic

world to the international community and familiarize international viewers with life in the Turkic world. This initiative is being, currently, implemented; on August 18, 2015, Astana hosted the first meeting of the ministers of information of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, at which the concept of a Turkic channel was developed.

The initiatives above prove the fact that Kazakhstan is an active promoter of the enhanced cooperation among Turkic speaking nations, realizing its unique civilizational role of being a bridge between Europe and Asia. As President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan rightly emphasized, the Turkic Council became a link between the East and the West, both geographically and in terms of energy.

In this respect, the following initiatives of the President of Kazakhstan are particularly important: the New Silk Road project aimed at constructing a series of sub-regional and sub-continental transport corridors through Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea. The Nuryly Zhol National Programme may also be regarded as a part of this broader project. The Programme stipulates for building and reconstructing of the extensive multi-level transport and logistical infrastructure in Kazakhstan. In other words, the Programme is a new vector

of cooperation with the Turkic-speaking countries.

All issues concerning the relations among the Turkic speaking nations have been in the scope of attention of the expert communities of these countries, who have been involved in the development of the strategic agenda of Turkic integration. Cooperation among the think tanks of the Turkic speaking countries is an important component of the intergovernmental relations. As a part of the academic and expert cooperation, research and discussions about the most important issues of Turkic integration, think tanks are strengthening the bilateral and multilateral ties among the research institutions, facilitate the conduction of the events and realizations of joint projects. Thus, the Declaration on Cooperation of the Institutes and Centers for Strategic Studies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Turkey was signed on April 20, 2015 in Astana, and the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan were signed on May 6, 2015 in Baku.

Today, given the uncertain character of the global and regional geopolitical situation, good regional cooperation is even more relevant than ever. It is very important to ensure that cooperation among all Turkic speaking nations in both bilateral and multilateral formats will continue and develop.



THE TURKIC COUNCIL'S INCREASING ROLE IN PROMOTING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN EURASIA

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Turkic speaking societies played an important role in world history for thousands of years. The last two decades have been historical for the countries of the region, and Turkic speaking countries have again come into prominence. Five Turkic speaking republics gained independence from the Soviet Union: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Turkey was the first country to recognize the independence of these countries.

In these years Turkey has experienced political and economic breakthroughs. Because of this, it became possible to set up and launch several major initiatives to increase cooperation among the Turkic countries. Several new organizations came into existence such as TURKSOY, TURKPA, and the Turkic Council. These are all playing increasingly important roles in promoting regional cooperation in Eurasia.

Multilateral cooperation is possible in the network of regional cooperation. Regional initiatives and organizations cover a number of countries unequally, at the same time various multilateral platforms can be useful in varying degrees for building up relationships. But the intensity of economic and social relations is not always determined within the region, and it calls into question how the main relationships and vectors of regional organizations are formed within the Turkic speaking region.

Such an analysis of the current situation of regional cooperation indicates the following: Organizations of the Turkic speaking countries such as TURKSOY, TURKPA, and the Turkic Council will play a major role in facilitating cooperation across the region.

Regional players like the EEU (Eurasian Economic Union), the ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization), the CSTO

(Collective Security Treaty Organization), the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) and other regional organizations will also have an active role.

Various players, such as Russia, China, the US, and the EU will increase their efforts on involving Turkic countries for development.

New economic and political concepts and organizations will be active in the region, such as the Silk Road Economic Belt (China), the New Silk Road (US), etc.

At the moment there is no single conception of the Central Asian region. Countries are divided by interests in compliance with their internal resources; frequently dissensions take place between them because of border issues.

There are many common challenges and issues that the countries of the region face today such as security challenges (traditional and non-traditional), including the growth of violent extremism, terrorism, drug and human trafficking; social and economic challenges: including slowing growth and inflation, as well as reduction of foreign direct investment; and environmental challenges: including air pollution and access to clean water.

Many of these challenges cannot be resolved by countries individually and require a joint effort by the countries of the region. For a politically stable, economically sustainable and safe development of the region it is necessary to conduct regular political dialogue and cooperation with the Turkic speaking partners.

Organizations such as TURKSOY, TURKPA and the Turkic Council are not only the platform for such dialogue and exchange of

views and discussions on cultural, political and economic partnership, but they play important roles in clarifying and possible coordination of positions in the geopolitical arena. In connection with the above, prospective directions for contributing to regional cooperation are intensifying the educational and humanitarian links between Turkic speaking countries through establishing relations between educational organizations, development of trade, creation of favorable conditions for implementation of commercial initiatives in the abovementioned areas, and development of cultural-historical initiatives with regional countries.

Special attention deserves to be given to the issue of cooperation among the think tanks of the Turkic speaking countries. The year 2015 was very productive in terms of meetings among the heads of think tanks. Two meetings took place in Astana and Baku in spring and summer. The third meeting of think tanks is planned in Turkey in fall 2015, to be followed by a meeting in Bishkek.

Development of tourism is also a prospective area for cooperation between Turkic speaking countries. Turkey's great experience in this area could help the Central Asian republics jointly offer attractive tourist projects that will bring the tourism industry in the region to a new level.

The presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan note the importance of cooperation in the transport sector and the construction of new roads. At the Turkic Council Summit in Azerbaijan, President Atambayev said that the road "from Kyrgyzstan can be extended to Chinese Kashgar. This would be a great achievement in our work, because

we have provided to strengthen economic ties between our countries “. Today it is undisputed that the Silk Road was once the main trade route in the world. This understanding has been supported by the Turkish President, who said that “the Silk Road - is the key to the economic development and political strengthening of the Turkic world”.

Factors such as common history, ethnic and linguistic affinity brought together the Turkic-speaking states. The cultural identity of the Turkic people symbolized the first

World Games of Nomads, which was held in September 2014 at Issyk Kul under the auspices of the Turkic Council. This event is also to be followed annually in different countries.

However, today this is not enough and it is necessary to develop transport corridors, create an attractive investment environment and promote integration relations. We need to continue to seek mutually beneficial ways to cooperate in order to strengthen relations among our countries.



CHANGING WORLD POLITICS, PEACE AND ORDER IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS, AND THE ROLE OF TURKIC COUNCIL

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The United States, NATO, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CoE) had all put their stamps on the new security environments in Europe and Eurasia after the end of the Cold War, and the worldwide international security architecture in the early 1990s was refigured by the new hegemonies of the international system. However, early enthusiasm over the victory of liberal values in the international arena soon withered, and policy makers, academicians and commentators began articulating the fact that the world in the late 20th century was turning out to be a more complicated and complex yet still dangerous place.

I use the metaphor of “twilight” to define the strange world we now live in, and I believe that world politics have been passing through twilight years in the late 20th and initial decades of the 21st century. This is not only because of the relative erosion in American preeminence in global politics and economics and the rise of the Asia Pacific, China or India or the non-Western World in general, but also due to the proliferation of new actors in world politics and even the changing nature of conventional actors in this ever globalizing politics and economics. In addition to the conventional threats and challenges at the state level, the proliferation of new dangers, threats and challenges emanating from non-state actors in the international arena were stamped on even NATO’s often-cited strategy concept in 2010.

With regard to the more complicated world politics and international security structure of the 2000s, I would mention three seismic shocks that have triggered fault lines of international politics and have had the capacity to change the international system in a structural way. One is, of course, the attack on the US on 9/11

and the subsequent US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq; the second is the Arab awakening and the subsequent political crisis in the Middle East, including NATO's military intervention into Libya and the Syrian civil war; and third is the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea and Russia's aggressive policy against Ukraine's eastern border. We would add the recent partition of Iraq as a consequence of the Great powers' grave mistakes in the field. As can be easily seen, all these seismic shocks have taken place around Turkey.

The picture is more complicated if we add in the diversity of the actors involved in the political processes. The new actors in the international security arena are not only the powerful sovereign states, but also non-state organizations, such as para-military organizations, that could potentially even win victories over sovereign state militaries, such as that of Iraq. Thus, the nature of conflict has been in a process of change and the frontiers between domestic and international wars have become blurred as can be seen in the cases of Syria, Iraq and some eastern towns of Ukraine.

All these changes and challenges have started to influence broader Eurasian politics including those of Central Asia and the Caucasus. The geopolitical future of Eurasia, in this global context, will depend on four basic global variables: One is the American re-evaluation of the politics of a new silk road initiative after America's general Asia-Pivot strategic orientation; second is the future of Chinese political, economic and social policies toward the region and China's next steps in terms of the Silk Road Project; third is the future of Russian-American/European tensions after the Ukraine/Crimea crisis and

finally, Sino-Russia relations. Yet another very important variable in this regard is the capability and capacity of Eurasian nations to boost regional, bilateral and multilateral cooperation and collaboration to face new challenges and promote prosperity, peace and security in the region.

I believe that cooperation among the Central Asian nations is also a very important variable. However, the reluctance for more regional cooperation, which seems widespread among regional policy makers, remains a big obstacle. It is critical that we see and understand this reluctance in order to figure out effective and original ways of getting rid of or, at minimum, reducing it.

One reason behind the reluctance is the low-level of mutual trust and confidence among decision-makers and peoples in the region. Even the liberal concept of a win-win situation may not be helpful in this regard because policy-makers in the region may prefer "relative gains" over a "win-win" conceptualization.

Therefore, what we need now is to enhance mutual trust at both the elite and popular levels. When we look at some successful examples from world political history of regional cooperation and integration and the constructing of mutual trust and confidence, the role and function of societal factors comes to the fore.

A good example is the history of European integration. The EU is not a model per se for the whole of Central Asia and the Caucasus, which is quite a different region, but there might be still some inspiration that can be drawn from European history. Two processes could be emphasized here: one is the famous idea in international relations,

doux commerce, the soothing effect of trade, the other is the societal factors or transnational relations as a strong tool for regional cooperation/integration. The term 'transnational relations' has some negative connotations in the region, as it may be associated with transnational crime, drug trafficking or even transnational extremist groups. These are, of course, real threats to regional security, stability, and peace. On the other hand, transnational relations and interactions and increasing social mobilization across borders can also have the potential to eliminate social and cultural stereotypes and prejudices and help remove some historical baggage in the region.

In addition, increasing transnational activities among civil societies from different countries in the region could establish some transnational, not supranational, common identities that could potentially lead to less fear, and more trust and understanding among the peoples. More transnationalism should not be seen as an alternative to the national identities in Central Asia. I strongly believe that strong national identities in the region are an indispensable part of regional cooperation and integration. Some suggestions in this regard may include building up student and academic exchange programmes, like the Erasmus program, or regional cultural and social organizations, events and occasions among the various Central Asian states.

The second issue concerns the cultural ties that promote cooperation in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. My sincere belief is that common cultural and linguistic ties shared by the peoples in the region could contribute positively to a popular psychology of mutual trust and understanding if conducted prop-

erly and professionally. I differentiate the cultural policies in this regard as inclusive and exclusive. Promoting a common history, language, culture and traditions should not be exclusive, rejectionist and parochial but inclusive and universal appeals. The Central Asian states and Azerbaijan share many common cultural and civilizational elements. One point here is important and quite sensitive: promoting common ties is not for the construction of any kind of supranational identity but rather in order to contribute to mutual understanding among the nations in the region.

There exist, for example, many figures that constitute a common historical literature in the region, such as Hoca Ahmet Yesevi, Hoca Nasreddin or Effendi, Korkut Ata or Dede Korkut, Köroglu or Göroglu, Manas, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Ali Shir Nevai, Mahtumkuli, Fuzuli and so on. Let me repeat again that cultural policies should not produce enmity or promote the idea of "the other" in the region but should rather emphasize common cultural ties. Thus, the robust transnational linkages from people to people could be an important factor for furthering cooperation among the nations in Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

One of the interesting facts regarding the possibility of regional cooperation in the region, though there exist several such regional organizations, is that it seems that few are truly effective in terms of supporting preventive diplomacy and conflict management. It seems that there is almost a consensus that the region needs an effective, robust and powerful regional cooperation to cope with the problems and challenges that could stabilize the whole region. Let me refer to the *Turkic Council*, as a young organization

in the region, and as a possible regional organization with the potential to boost peace, cooperation, collaboration and friendship among nations in the region.

We cannot predict the future, but it seems that world politics are heading towards a more pluralistic and complex yet not very secure place. We cannot be sure whether we will have global re-equilibrium after passing through the aforementioned period of time. But, we can be sure that Eurasia will continue to maintain its importance in global politics and economics. Further cooperation and integration among the Central Asian nations and Azerbaijan will help serve to broader Eurasian security, peace and prosperity. The Turkic Council, as one example, can serve to these purposes in the region, in collaboration with other regional and international organizations.

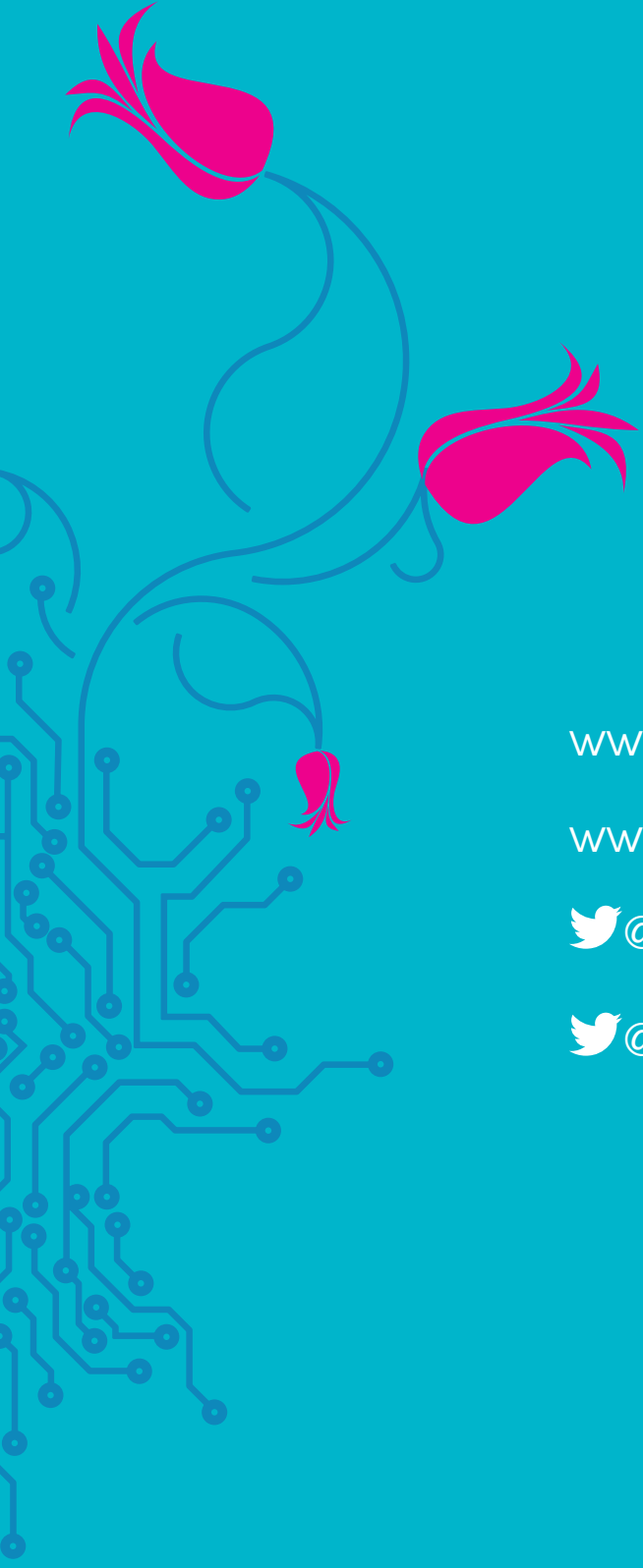
Turkey's policies to face regional problems will be most probably within the following parameters:

Central Asia and Azerbaijan will continue to be very special for Turkey, and Turkey's good relations with these states will continue to be a high priority for Turkish national interests.

Turkey will continue to attach great importance to NATO membership, and NATO

will continue to be the major security-provider organization in the region. Turkey, as we all know, has supported Ukrainian sovereignty and has never accepted the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea. Turkey has declared several times that the Russian annexation of Crimea is against international law and regulations, and that this action would jeopardize regional and international security. However, Turkey also wants to maintain good relations with Russia, which is in fact a requirement of Turkey's multi-focal and diversified foreign policy strategy. Therefore, while Turkey is a staunch member of NATO and a negotiating candidate for the EU, it is also a dialogue partner in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO); a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is the second largest international organization in terms of number of members; a member of the Turkish Council; and a member observer of the Africa Union organization.

Turkey will continue to pursue this multifocal foreign policy, in its ongoing efforts to strengthen regional and international peace and security. As a member of NATO, a dialogue partner in the SCO, and a member observer of the AU, Turkey's place in the world is unique.



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