

## POLICY BRIEF:

# Formality or Reality of the Future

## “The New Era of Turkic Civilization: Toward Shared Progress and Prosperity

(As a result of the meeting of the heads of the member states of the Organization of Turkic States in Samarkand 11.11.2022)



The Organization of Turkic States has undergone a major transformation from the 1992 summit of heads of Turkic language states under the Turkish presidency in Ankara and the 2009 summit in Nakhichevan, where an agreement was signed to create the Cooperation Council of Turkic Language States (Turkic Council), to the November 2021 summit in Turkey, where the leaders of the participating countries decided to rename the Turkic Council into the Organization of Turkic States. The ninth summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), which was held on November 11, 2022, in Samarkand, only continued this transformation of the OTS.

The main question is to understand whether the OTS has the prospect to grow into the likeness of the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with the natural growth of new members and observers or whether it is just another formal organization, which will remain only a platform for the discussion of pressing international issues?

According to the outcome of the ninth summit, three main points can be emphasized: the intention to transform into a full-fledged international organization-1, an attempt at integration in trade, economic and financial integration-2, the development of transport interconnection of Turkic states and the diversification of transport communication between Europe and Asia.-3

1. *Protocol on Amendments to the Nakhchivan Agreement on Establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic States; Organization of Turkic States Summit Declaration; Decision on adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the Organization of Turkic States; Decision on appointment of Secretary General of the Organization of Turkic States and his deputies as well as the President and Vice-President of the Turkic Academy; Development Strategy of the TSO for the years 2022-2026 for implementing the Concept of Turkic World till 2024, adopted at the Summit 2021, which covers the areas of politics and security*
2. *Decision to establish the Turkic Investment Fund with an authorized capital of up to \$500 million; Intentions to develop the TURANEZ special economic zone in the Turkestan region; Establishment of the Council of Banking Associations of Turkic States.*
3. *The need for further development of the East-West Trans-Caspian International Corridor; Efforts to open the Zangezur Corridor as soon as possible; Increasing the capacity of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars*

*railway line; Construction of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-PRC railway line; Construction of the Termez-Mazori Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway line*

## Positives and Negatives

The primary positive side of the OTS is the ideology that unites the member states based on a common history, language, and culture. This factor provides a positive perspective.

On the other hand, the above is a big disadvantage. Firstly, because the populations of the participating countries themselves are not only Turkic-speaking peoples. Secondly, Turkic peoples are not all independent states (XUAR in the PRC, Tatarstan, and Bashkiriya in the RF, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) and countries where they live in no way associate themselves with the Turks, and this, in turn, can cause a negative reaction from these countries. Thirdly, the population of the participating countries is not only Turkic (about 75% of the total population). As for the railway line projects, which should increase trade turnover between the countries, there are a number of problems associated with third countries (Armenia and Iran in the issue of "Zangezur corridor", the threat of the Afghan Taliban in the line Termez - Mazori Sharif - Kabul - Peshawar)

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The ninth JTF Summit in Samarkand only gave some seriousness to the organization itself as a subject of international relations. The goals that were announced are very ambitious, but it is too early to say that this organization can compete with other organizations in terms of efficiency as this organization is at its very beginning. The capital of the investment fund is not significant; the turnover between the participants is 4% of the total volume of foreign trade.

At this stage, the organization is more like another formal platform where problems will be discussed and intentions to solve them will be made. We should not forget that there are certain disagreements between the member countries, and some issues are impossible to address without interaction with third countries.

But one thing is certain - the positive dynamics that will come from this organization is a positive growth in economic cooperation between the member countries. Considering the general parameters, the essence of the organization is not significantly different from other organizations, where thousands of documents are accepted for signing every year, but the implementation process remains unresolved.

On the other hand, this organization should not be underestimated. In order to keep the Turkic states informed and alert, they should become observer states. It would be most appropriate to promote the idea of peaceful coexistence of Central Asian countries with different peoples, cultures, languages, and faiths, in contrast to the nationalist ideology currently inherent in this organization.

Turkey could contribute to the creation of a regional (Central Asian) organization, but the division of the region along linguistic lines and the militarization of some countries (unilateral transfer of shock weapons - Bayraktar, etc.) is not in the interests of all countries in the region.

As Turkey's position in the Central Asian region strengthens, Iran and China (with the participation of Tajikistan) may coordinate on the anti-Turkish ground, which will also revive the legacy of the "Great Game" with less intensity.