

Organization of Turkic States Has Become Body of Global Structure

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ABSTRACT: The name of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) has been officially changed to the Organization of Turkic States, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at the 8th Summit of the Turkic Council held in Istanbul, according to media reports. Judging from the change of the name, the organization has been politicized and has been upgraded into a political union. The organization aims "to guarantee the continuity of an environment of stability and trust in countries and regions geopolitically" This article analyzes the level of strategic importance of Organization of Turkic States and shows some of as an important actor in the political field.

KEYWORD: Turkey, Turkic Countries, Central Asia, Turkish Speaking Countries.

Looking at the formation process of the Organization of Turkic States as an international organization, it is necessary to list the stages of development that began in the 90s of the last century. The first stage began after the collapse of the USSR and the summit of the leaders of Turkic-speaking countries in 1992 in Ankara with the participation of the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. First, some of OTS's work and projects regarding internal economic integration and cooperation are of great importance for the development and strengthening of trade and economic relations between Europe and Asia. At the eighth meeting of the heads of the OTS's Customs Service in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, discussions focused on the creation of a simplified customs corridor aimed at increasing the efficiency of transportation, optimizing the passage of goods through border control, developing transport and logistics system, as well as facilitating and ensuring the security of these processes.

The second stage can be called the legal formalization of our cooperation mechanism. In 2009, the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking countries was established in Nakhichevan. In the following years, we were able to institutionalize our industry cooperation and create affiliated platforms such as TurkPA, Turkic Academy and Turkish Language Culture and Heritage Foundation. This stage ended with the expansion of our structure due to the entry of Uzbekistan as a full member.

With the historical summit held in Istanbul in November 2021, the third stage, which will be remembered as an important turning point of the organization for our Turkish family, began, and the relations between the member states entered a new era of consistency and comprehensive cooperation. During the summit, the presidents of the Turkic states decided to change the name of the Turkic Council to the "Organization of the Turkic States". This serves to realize its real potential, increase its importance and strengthen its role in the international community. By the way, about the reason for the name change. From a legal point of view, the Turkic Council has always been an international intergovernmental organization. This change does not affect

the legal status of the organization. But from a political point of view, this step means that the cooperation between the Turkic countries has reached a new level and acquired a completely different meaning. Unlike the previous one, the current name emphasizes that the peoples of our countries belong to a single feature characterized by the important common language, history, centuries-old traditions, culture and spiritual values. They are also united by common political, economic, cultural and humanitarian interests, which is natural for countries located in a common geopolitical, economic and cultural space. In addition, it can be confidently stated that the achievements in multi-sectoral cooperation and the strong will of the leaders of the Turkic countries for more successful integration served to change the name of the organization. Simultaneously, the document “View of the Turkish World – 2040” was ratified. The current situation implies that the OTS is particularly interested in multilateral cooperation in all spheres, especially on economic, education and cultural considerations, as well as building confidence regarding regional cooperation issues. To promote economic integration and adequately respond to global shocks, the OTS is fostering collaboration in various directions, including trade, energy, transport and logistics, cybersecurity, agriculture, tourism, law and order, the formation of platforms for overcoming modern challenges and cultural relations. These efforts have been illustrated by several recent examples.

First, some of OTS’s work and projects regarding internal economic integration and cooperation are of great importance for the development and strengthening of trade and economic relations between Europe and Asia. At the eighth meeting of the heads of the OTS’s Customs Service in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, discussions focused on the creation of a simplified customs corridor aimed at increasing the efficiency of transportation, optimizing the passage of goods through border control, developing transport and logistics system, as well as facilitating and ensuring the security of these processes.

Second, at the ad hoc meeting of responsible information technology ministers from the organization’s member countries in Baku, Azerbaijan, proposals were put forward to increase regional collaboration on cybersecurity. Integration will be done both in multilateral and bilateral formats, in connection with the recognition of electronic signatures.

Third, at the OTS’s agribusiness forum in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, the possibility of expanding cooperation between member countries via the implementation of joint projects was discussed, particularly in agricultural education, technology transfer, as well as plant and animal health. At the first meeting of the Organization of Turkic States on Human Resources, convened in Istanbul on July 28–29, the member countries agreed on several measures that will be executed jointly, including the formation of thematic working groups, experience-sharing programs and the launch of a comprehensive training program for bureaucrats of OTS member and observer states.

Currently, the OTS is becoming more and more attractive, and various countries are eager to either join it or participate in its activities as observers. As of the end of July 2022, 15 countries have declared interest in joining the organization as observers. Several reasons underline this fact. OTS member countries possess rich natural resources, modern infrastructure, energy resources and logistics arteries toward the European Union and China. Additionally, the organization has not been confronted with any competitive third parties from a political point of view. In terms of relations among OTS members, bilateral relations are of critical importance. In this light, particular attention is paid to the development of transportation routes and energy corridors passing through the Caspian Sea from Central Asia. From this perspective, large infrastructure investments have been made in these countries, and such investment projects are expanding. Thus, the opportunity has presented itself to turn all roads, including the Trans-Caspian East-West-Middle Corridor through the Caspian Sea, into the main arteries for the region, mirrored by the global export routes of Central Asia’s energy resources. As a continuation of this policy, on June 27, the first tripartite meeting of the foreign and transport ministers from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey was held in Baku. This format is planned to

become an effective mechanism in strengthening security, stability and cooperation, both regionally and in a broader sense.

Therefore, the OTS's main objectives include creating favorable conditions for regional trade relations and investments; striving for comprehensive and balanced economic, social and cultural development; expanding mutual relations in science, technology, education and culture; and contributing in a significant manner to the region's peace and security.

However, the organization does not limit itself to purely working within the framework of its member states. The OTS regularly cooperates with neighboring states and organizations. Currently, as threats to global security, stability and economic development are increasing, strengthening cooperation in the transport, energy and economic sectors will be crucial for preventing and reducing the risks and challenges of the wider Eurasia region. It is therefore no coincidence that the expert community evaluates the OTS as a "new geopolitical reality" in the Eurasian space.

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