



Uzbekistan and the Organization of Turkic States: Main Vectors of Cooperation

Sadriddin Akramovich Rakhimov

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Historical Sciences, Journalism and Mass Communications University of Uzbekistan

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Abstract

The article analyzes the interaction of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council), reveals the goals, structure and main activities of this association, the entry of the republic into the Turkic Council as a full member, as well as the transformation of this structure into the Organization of Turkic States. Special attention is paid to the participation of Uzbekistan in the institutional development of this organization. The types of trade regimes of Uzbekistan with the participating countries are described, the volume and structure of the economic potential, which contributes to the development of trade and economic cooperation within the organization.

Keywords: *Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States; Turkic Council; Organization of Turkic States; Foreign Policy; Secretariat; Cooperation; Summit; Ratification*

Introduction

In the context of globalization, in the formation of a new system of international relations, great importance is attached to ongoing regional events, since the modern realities of an interconnected world show that the problems that exist in individual countries and regions can have global consequences. In this regard, given the dynamically changing geopolitical situation, Uzbekistan is actively involved in the search for new approaches to ensuring stability and sustainable development of the region. At the same time, an important factor for sustainable development for the republic is mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States and other international structures in investment, trade, economic, cultural, humanitarian and other areas, as well as the formation of alternative most efficient transit corridors that contribute to the output of Uzbek products to promise regional and global markets.

The Turkic Council is a New Platform for Multilateral Cooperation

Uzbekistan pursuing an open foreign policy and having its interest in close partnership with the Turkic world without prejudice to third countries, became a member of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTS or Turkic Council).

The Turkic Council is an international intergovernmental organization whose activities cover a wide range of issues of political, economic, cultural–humanitarian and scientifically technical cooperation

between Turkic-speaking countries, maintaining peace, security and mutual trust in the region and the world. The Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States was established on October 3, 2009 at the summit of the heads of Turkic-speaking countries in the city of Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan), and the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey became its first members.

In accordance with the Nakhichevan Agreement [1], in order to fulfill the goals and objectives building before the Turkic Council, the heads of state, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Committee of Senior Officials, the Council of Elders of Turkic Speaking States and the Secretariat were created.

The highest body of the Turkic Council is the Council of the Heads of State, during the meetings of which the issues of interaction between the participating countries in solving urgent international problems are considered, priority areas of cooperation are determined, and the activities of the association are reviewed. Meetings of the Council of Heads of State are held as a rule once a year, and extraordinary meetings may be convened by agreement of the member countries.

The permanent executive body of the Turkic Council is the Secretariat, which carries out the necessary administrative, organizational, protocol and technical measures for holding meetings of the councils of heads of state, the Foreign Ministry and other meetings under the auspices of the association. The Secretariat is located in the city of Istanbul, headed by the Secretary General, appointed from among the citizens of the member countries on a rotational basis for three years without the right to extend the term of office.

In addition, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking States (TurkPA) in Baku, the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY) in Ankara, the International Turkic Academy in Astana and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation in Baku operate under the auspices of the Turkic Council. Economic cooperation within the framework of the organization is coordinated by the Turkic Business Council.

It should be noted that in recent years the Republic of Uzbekistan has been consistently developing cooperation with the countries of the Turkic Council. Thus, in September 2018, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as an honored guest, took part in the sixth CCTS summit held in Cholpon-Ata (Kyrgyzstan). During his speech, Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated that “we are interested in the further development of mutually beneficial cooperation within the framework of the Turkic Council. At this stage, we are ready to participate in its activities in areas of practical interest to our country” [2]. At the summit, the head of Uzbekistan also put forward a number of specific initiatives to strengthen ties with the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, including proposals to declare the city of Khiva the cultural capital of the Turkic world [3] and to hold one of the meetings of the Business Council in Tashkent¹.

Uzbekistan’s Entry into the CCTS

The Republic of Uzbekistan became a full member of the Turkic Council on October 14, 2019 by ratifying the Nakhichevan Agreement on the establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States [4], which is the result of the intensification of its multilateral diplomacy carried out over the past years. In turn, the entry of Uzbekistan into the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States gave new momentum to the development of the association and large-scale regional cooperation. So, in his statement, the then Secretary General of the CCTS Baghdad Amreyev noted that “Uzbekistan has

¹ As part of the initiatives put forward by Uzbekistan, at the 6th Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States on October 5, 2019, meetings of the Business Council and the Investment Forum of Turkic Speaking Countries were held in Tashkent. And at the 37th meeting of the Permanent Council of TURKSOY, which took place from November 30 to December 2, 2019 in the city of Osh (Kyrgyzstan), a unanimous decision was made to declare Khiva (Uzbekistan) the “Cultural Capital of the Turkic World” in 2020.

always been one of the central factors of the Turkic world, as well as the economic and cultural cradle of the Turkic–Islamic history with its glorious cities – Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, located along the Great Silk Road. The fraternal Uzbek people with their rich national and historical heritage has made a huge contribution to world civilization. Today, Uzbekistan, with its growing capabilities, opens a new chapter of cooperation not only with its fraternal countries, but with all countries of the world” [5].

On October 15, 2019, the 7th summit of the Turkic Council was held in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, where Uzbekistan for the first time took part as a full member. Within the framework of the summit, issues of multilateral cooperation of the countries of the Turkic Council in the political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres were discussed. Considerable attention was paid to the development of the Trans–Caspian trade and transport corridor East–West. There was also an exchange of views on topical issues of the regional and international agenda.

In his speech at the summit, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that participation in the Turkic Council fully meets the fundamental interests of our people. Today, not only our cultural and spiritual ties, but also trade and economic relations have reached a new level. Over the past three years, the volume of mutual trade between our countries has almost doubled, more than a thousand joint ventures have been created. Transport links are expanding, the number of visa–free tourist trips is growing, and the bonds of brotherhood between our peoples are growing stronger [6].

Shavkat Mirziyoyev stressed the importance of implementing large transport and communication projects, which will create broad opportunities for entering the markets of Europe, China and South Asia, as well as effectively using the potential of the new Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway, and also put forward practical proposals for organizing joint technology parks, innovation funds, the opening of trading houses of Turkic–speaking countries and the expansion of regional tourism.

Taking into account the fact that at present more than 40 percent of the population of the member states of the association is young people, the head of Uzbekistan also proposed to establish a Forum of Young Entrepreneurs² within the framework of the Turkic Council.

Transformation of the Turkic Council into the Organization of Turkic States

In order to increase the role and authority in the international arena during the next summit in November 2021, the Cooperation Council of Turkic–Speaking States was transformed into the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) and its first summit in the new format was held on November 10–11, 2022 in Samarkand under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, which was attended by the heads of five member states, two observer countries and heads of affiliated structures during the merger. During the meeting, held under the motto “New era of Turkic civilization: towards common development and prosperity”, the main attention was paid to the issues of further development of multifaceted and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as improving the activities of the OTS. The chairmanship in the Organization passed from Turkey to Uzbekistan.

The head of Uzbekistan, speaking at the summit, informed that Uzbekistan during its chairmanship intends to effectively implement the concept of “Turkic World Vision–2040” and the five–year OTS Strategy adopted at this summit, strengthen the authority of the Organization, covering a vast region with a population of over 170 million people and bring to another a higher level of cooperation in the area of association of countries and peoples with a common history, language and culture. Shavkat Mirziyoyev also stressed that “the issues, concept documents and programs included in the agenda, our most important initiatives are in tune with the UN Sustainable Development Goals” [7] and noted the importance of joint actions within the framework of the OTS to expand trade, economic, investment,

² The first forum of young entrepreneurs within the framework of the CCTS was held in September 2021 in Tashkent, which was attended by more than 200 young entrepreneurs from Azerbaijan, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan, international experts, heads of ministries and departments responsible for youth issues, and also leadership of the CCTS Secretariat.

cultural and humanitarian cooperation, creation of a modern transport infrastructure, efficient use of transport and transit potential, creation of an effective food supply system based on the needs of global and domestic markets, as well as in solving urgent problems of our time.

In general, the OTS Samarkand summit opened new horizons and prospects for practical cooperation between the Turkic countries. The summit discussed the current state and prospects for cooperation in the economic, political and humanitarian spheres, considered issues of strengthening interconnectedness and expanding cooperation in the field of energy and agriculture, strengthening transport interconnectedness and investment interaction, developing regional tourism, as well as developing effective mechanisms for interaction in the field of science and education, technology and innovation. The leaders of the member states unanimously supported the proposal of Uzbekistan to declare 2023 “the Year of the Rise of the Turkic Civilization”.

As a result of the meeting, 11 important documents were adopted aimed at further expanding multifaceted cooperation and strengthening the institutional foundations of the Organization, including the OTS Strategy for 2022–2026 as part of the implementation of the “Turkic World Vision–2040” concept, the decision to establish the Turkic Investment Fund, and the Assistance Strategy trade of the Organization of Turkic States, on the agreement on simplification of the customs corridor between the governments of the member states, the Transport Interconnectivity Program, as well as the Samarkand Declaration, which reflects the common approaches of the member countries to solving regional and global problems and the determination of the countries of the Organization to further deepen cooperation based on commonality history, language, culture, traditions and values of the Turkic people.

Currently, the OTS is an important platform for multilateral mutually beneficial cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries. The member states of the union are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan, Hungary and Turkmenistan have the status of an observer country in the organization. Metals, energy resources, developed industry. For example, in terms of natural gas reserves, Turkmenistan ranks 4th in the world, Azerbaijan 17th, Kazakhstan 19th, Uzbekistan 22nd, Kazakhstan 11th in terms of oil reserves, Azerbaijan 20th. In terms of steel production, Turkey ranks 7th in the world, while Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are major copper producers. The OTS countries produce large volumes of agricultural products, while the volume of agricultural and food products produced covers the needs of the population of the OTS member countries for the main types of food products and ensures their food security.

The total volume of foreign trade of the OTS countries in 2021 amounted to \$974.4 billion, of which exports – \$465.7 billion, imports – \$508.7 billion. Over the past 5 years, the trade turnover of Uzbekistan with the OTS countries has grown by 2.4 times from \$4 billion (2017) to \$9.4 billion (2021), exports by 1.8 times from \$2.2 billion to \$3.9 billion, imports by 3 times from \$1.8 billion to \$5.5 billion [8]. The OTS member countries, in particular Turkey and the countries of Central Asia, are among the main trade and economic partners of Uzbekistan, while a free trade regime has been established with Azerbaijan and the countries of Central Asia, and with Turkey and Hungary the most favored nation trade regime.

Conclusion

Summarizing the above, it can be noted that the cooperation of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the Organization of Turkic States is consistently developing and has a multifaceted and mutually beneficial character.

Considering that the OTS member countries are located on a vast territory connecting Europe with Asia, the implementation of large transport and transit projects within the framework of the association will create wide opportunities for entering the markets of Europe, China, Southwest and South Asia. Strengthening cooperation ties and simplifying customs procedures between the countries of the

OTS, the establishment of the Turkic Investment Fund will contribute to the growth of investment, the creation of joint production facilities for the production of high-tech products that are in demand in the markets of third countries. Cooperation in the field of culture plays an important role in the development of a comprehensive dialogue between the countries of the organization, science and technology, health, education, and the development of regional tourism.

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