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## **D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND TURKEY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL RELATIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Along with the phenomenon of globalization, the international system has emerged from the hegemony of unitary nation-states and has taken on multiple structures including multinational companies and regional-international organizations. The end of the Cold War period has allowed the ideological and single-centered foreign policy moves to progress pragmatically. Developing 8 (D-8), which is an example of non-Western based international organizations, is an Istanbul-based organization that has no particular political domination and covers more developing countries and prioritizes peace and justice. D-8 is a global structure in terms of geographical area as well as its basic principles and purposes, where the parameters such as population, economic potential, geopolitical location bring a great advantage. However, it is evaluated that it does not reach a sufficient level in terms of attracting its advantages to practice. This study was prepared to analyze the place of D-8 organization in the international political relations dimension, to examine its current potential.

**Keywords:** International Politics, Economic Cooperation, Development, D-8, Hegemony.

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## ULUSLARARASI POLİTİK İLİŞKİLER KAPSAMINDA D-8 EKONOMİK İŞBİRLİĞİ ÖRGÜTÜ VE TÜRKİYE

### ÖZET

Küreselleşme olgusuyla birlikte uluslararası sistem üniter ulus devletlerin hegemonyasından çıkarak çok uluslu şirketlerin ve bölgesel-uluslararası örgütlerin de dahil olduğu çoklu bir yapıya bürünmüş, Soğuk Savaş döneminin bitişi ise ideolojik ve tek merkezli dış politika hamlelerinin pragmatik yapıda ilerlemesine olanak vermiştir. Batı merkezli olmayan uluslararası örgütlere örnek olan Developing 8 (D-8), belirli bir siyasi tahakkümün olmadığı, daha çok gelişmekte olan ülkeleri kapsayan, barış ve adaleti önceleyen İstanbul merkezli bir teşkilattır. Nüfus, ekonomik potansiyel, jeopolitik konum gibi sahip olduğu parametrelerin büyük bir avantaj getirdiği D-8, gerek coğrafi alan gerek temel ilke ve amaçları bakımından küresel bir yapıdır. Fakat avantajlarını pratiğe çekebilme boyutunda yeterli seviyeye çıkamadığı değerlendirilmektedir. Bu çalışma, D-8 örgütünün uluslararası politik ilişkiler boyutundaki yerini analiz etmek, mevcut potansiyelini incelemek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uluslararası Politika, Ekonomik İşbirliği, Kalkınma, D-8, Hegemonya.

### INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the interactions between geographical discoveries and civilizations at a global level have brought about a deepening of mutual relations in political, social and cultural issues especially in the economy. The phenomenon of globalization, which entered the first phase of capitalism with the overseas expansion, has passed through various phases as a result of historical breaking points. Although the industrial revolution is one of the breaking points in question, the relations of production have changed radically and industrialized countries like England have added their economic power to their political power.

With the development of communication and transportation technologies in the global economic policy in the 1970s, the shift towards private companies made multinational companies important actors in global politics and an intricate relationship was established between nation-state, multinational companies and regional economic organizations. States, which are the main determining actors of the system according to realism, started to share their authorities with regional and cross-border organizations. This situation pointed to another breaking point where globalization gained momentum.

The stage in which globalization manifested itself was the end of the Cold War period, which entered the period of collapse with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the main strength of the system in this direction was the USA. The countries that have gained their independence from the Soviet Union and the states that are on the way to become regional powers have sought new quests to gain their political and economic powers by taking advantage of the authority gap. In this regard, integration into the Western world led by the USA after the Cold War has become the main political and economic goal of most countries and organizations, and the view that economic power depends on the relations with the West has become a definite acceptance.

But one of these exceptions “Developing Eight Organization for Economic Cooperation” or the D-8, in short, was the organization towards the goal of political and economic power that can be provided outside of the West, was established under Turkey's leadership. The D-8 organization is a global economic organization with regional potential, formed by 8 Islamic countries coming together, independent of the conjuncture of the pre-21st century period. Although the studies on D-8 are inadequate in the literature, there are claims that D-8 does not have a major impact compared to other economic organizations that can be compared. With this study, the structure, functioning and potential of the D-8 organization since its establishment will be examined and the gap in the literature will be tried to be eliminated. Besides, the domain of the organization will be revealed from a holistic perspective.

## **1. ESTABLISHMENT OF D-8: ISTANBUL DECLARATION**

States began to pursue a more liberal foreign policy after the restriction that the Cold War period brought to the foreign policies of Islamic countries disappeared after 1991. The D-8 organization is the result of this freedom and out-of-western quests (Hasgüler and Uludağ, 2014, p.429).

D-8, also known as "Developing Eight Organization for Economic Cooperation" is an organization that the prime minister Necmettin Erbakan in Turkey was founded in leadership. June 15, 1997, the meeting held in Istanbul State and adopted the Istanbul Declaration of Heads of Government Summit and Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Nigeria, the D-8 has brought the challenge (D-8, 2020).

Necmettin Erbakan, the pioneer in the establishment of the organization, stated that at the end of the 20th century, the D-8 was established with the aim of peace

and prosperity in the world and a new world should be created on the ground of peace (BIK, 2017). It is possible to state that the D-8 movement set out with a peaceful and developed world goal in this sense.

Two of the D-8 members are Africa, five are Asian and one is European. Since the members do not share a common area, the D-8 organization is more of a global organization in terms of the principles, objectives and scope it covers rather than regional (Gurbet, 2019, p.17). But D-8's understanding of sphericity differs from that of the other international organizations. The D-8 organization aims to contribute to the development of all developing countries around the world. Therefore, it does not reflect the attitudes of other international organizations that can act only in their interests (Alan, 2001, p.214).

Developing-8 (D-8), which was originally called "Muslim Eights" to refer to eight Islamic countries at first, but this conceptualization would not match the universal characteristics of domestic political reactions and economic integration (D- 8) was changed as (Taştekin, 2006, p.227).

There are great similarities between the countries that make up the D-8. The organizer; Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria and Bangladesh, the economic and military power in the Islamic countries are populous and medium-sized (Hasgüler and Uludag, 2014, p.429-430).



**Figure 1.** Geographical Distribution of D-8 Countries (URL-1)

Turkey D-8 initiative to Asia and Africa can be regarded as a correct expansion project. For example, in Indonesia and Malaysia, East Asia, Egypt and Nigeria are not considered as an important base in Africa, near Turkey's continental basin contains policies to address a lack of important elements. In addition, the fact that member countries have a population close to one-fifth of the human popula-

tion and possess an extremely important geostrategic belt constitutes an important position in terms of the potential of this project.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The main purpose of the D-8 initiative is to organize a potential economy among 8 countries that represent rich resources, large population and geographic area. In this context, it was aimed to create new opportunities in commercial relations, to increase participation in the decision making process at the international level, to provide better living conditions, to develop economic cooperation around concrete joint projects and to strengthen the status of developing countries in the world economy (Şahin, 2012, p.119).

Economy, trade, communication, information, finance-banking, agriculture, energy, tourism, culture, technology, etc. are some of these concrete projects that is aimed to be created in the fields (Kamel, 2001, p.251). In addition, it is aimed to carry out projects such as carrying out a teamwork to fight poverty, establishing an information network between countries, opening Islamic banks, and cooperating for the development of aquaculture (Ağır and Şahbaz, 2016, p.73).

When we look at the geographical distribution of the countries that are members of D-8, it can be stated that the organization looks like a global structuring rather than a regional one. D-8 is open to all developing countries, provided that it adheres to the organization's goals and principles (Doğan, 2015, p.167).



**Figure 2.** D-8 Flag (Demirtaş, 2012)

The 6 big stars on the flag of D-8 draw attention to the motto of the organization and express its basic principles. These principles are:

- Peace instead of war
- Dialogue instead of conflict,
- Cooperation instead of exploitation,

- Justice instead of the double standard,
- Equality instead of discrimination,
- Democracy instead of repression (SDAM, 2017).

Therefore, it is possible to express the existential goals of the D-8 organization in the form of peace and dialogue, with the help of justice and cooperation, to eliminate the foreign trade deficits of the member countries, to identify deficiencies, to increase their level of development and to assist the development of poor countries (Türkan and Alakuştekin, 2017, p.159). In addition, the development of human resources through education and fighting poverty in this direction constitutes one of the main objectives of the organization, since the majority of the people of the D-8 countries are at low level in terms of income level (Kamel, 2001, p.258).

The main organs of D-8 are Summit, Council, Commission and Secretariat.

- **Summit:** It is the top organ of the D-8. It consists of the Heads of State / Government of the member states. Meetings are held every two years.

- **Council:** Consists of the Foreign Ministers of the member states. It is the political decision-making body of D-8 and acts as a forum for a comprehensive evaluation of existing issues.

- **Commission:** It is the executive body of D-8. It consists of senior officials appointed by the relevant governments. Each Commissioner is responsible for national coordination in his country (D-8, 2020b; SDAM, 2017).

- **Secretariat:** The Secretariat aim is to ensure coordination between the member countries. The established secretariat is located in Istanbul Mecidiyeköy (Kılınç, 2013, p.30).

One of the factors influencing the establishment of D-8 was the slow functioning of the decision-making mechanism of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Although it Works with 57 members OIC is a structure where all Islamic countries are together, it is insufficient. D-8, which was established with the aim of rapid decision making and increasing the development levels of Islamic countries, has a similar appearance to the slow functioning of the Islamic Cooperation Organization and cannot use its potential (SDAM, 2017). In addition, the political aspect of the D-8 organization remains weak. Although the geographical distance of member countries to this situation is effective, the main factor is that members are also members of different regional and international organizations and try to solve most of their problems through these organizations (SDAM, 2017).

### 3. ACTIVITIES AND STUDIES

The activities of D-8 are organized by various meetings, especially the summit. In these meetings, while policies are established with the aims and objectives of D-8, cooperation issues are tried to be determined on the other hand. Cooperation within the scope of D-8 is carried out mainly on a sectoral basis (Şahin, 2012, p.121), the sector of each country continues in a certain way in advance:

- Turkey: Industry, health and environment,
- Bangladesh: Rural development,
- Indonesia: Anti-poverty and human resources,
- Iran: Science and technology,
- Malaysia: Finance, banking and privatization,
- Egypt: Trade,
- Nigeria: Energy,
- Pakistan: Agriculture and fisheries (Doğan, 2015, p.167).

However, countries can carry out studies in areas other than their sectors, and flexibility is left in this regard. In 2008, various cooperation topics were gathered under five general headings and identified as the main cooperation areas of the organization. These; trade, transportation, industry, agriculture and food security, energy and mines (Kılınç, 2013, p.31-32).

D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Dato Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari emphasized the 5 main areas of cooperation with his statement: “A trading system that will ensure the establishment of a better trade should come to the agenda. We are carrying out our work with our own currencies, where the trade will take place, joint studies will be carried out, our technological studies will be made and we will be less dependent on other countries.” (Turk, 2020). Therefore, in an environment where countries can trade with their currencies and realize joint technology breakthroughs, it is pointed out that foreign dependency may decrease in terms of other sectors.

The most important advantage of D-8 countries is that the states that make up the organization have no major problems with the West. Iran has a seamless relationship with the USA, especially Canada, Australia, England and EU countries (Hasgüler and Uludağ, 2014, p.430-431). Therefore, there is no obstacle for D-8 to cooperate with the West. All D-8 countries are also members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

At the United Nations General Assembly, the D-8 organization was granted "Observer Status" with the draft resolution adopted on 10 December 2014 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

#### 4. D-8 IN THE LIGHT OF ECONOMIC INDICATORS

When we look at the economic policies and moves that the D-8 organization realizes and cannot realize, it is seen that it carries out important activities in the international trade dimension. As can be seen in Figure 3, while its share in world trade was 3,3% in 1997, this ratio increased to 4.52% in 2017.



**Figure 3.** D-8 Countries and Their Positions in the World Economy 1997-2017 (Saray, 2019, p.173).

Therefore, we can state that the share of D-8 countries in the world economy has increased. The D-8, which realized 8.25% of its production on a global basis in 1997, increased to 9.42% in 2017. However, the same success has not been achieved in attracting foreign investors. The share of the D-8 group, which could attract only 0.38% of the total global foreign investment in 1997, only increased to 0.4% in 2017. On the other hand, the ratio of the total population of the member countries of the world population increased from 13.27% in 1997 to 14.71% in 2017 (Saray, 2019, p.173).

In Figure 4, the export and import data of the world for 2017, the last peak of D-8 is given. The USA is ranked first with 242,8 billion dollars of a trade surplus. England, Spain, China and India followed. Turkey and Egypt are the two D-8

countries that have trade surplus. The import rates of other D-8 member states have exceeded their export rates.

Country	Balance in value in 2017	Exported value in 2017	Imported value in 2017	Ranking
United States of America	242.8	780.9	538.1	1
United Kingdom	135.7	350.7	214.9	2
Spain	62.8	139.1	76.3	3
China	33.7	38.3	4.6	4
India	30.0	184.0	154.0	5
Thailand	29.8	75.7	45.8	6
Hong Kong	26.5	103.7	77.2	7
Luxembourg	26.0	102.3	76.3	8
Poland	21.0	59.2	38.2	9
Turkey	19.9	44.0	24.1	10
Egypt	2.6	20.0	17.4	38
Pakistan	-4.1	5.7	9.9	120
Malaysia	-5.4	36.8	42.1	123
Bangladesh	-5.4	3.9	9.3	124
Iran, Islamic Republic of	-6.6	10.1	16.7	127
Indonesia	-7.9	24.7	32.5	128
Nigeria	-13.2	5.0	18.2	135

**Figure 4.** Trade Balance Rates Including D-8 Countries 2017 (UNCTAD, 2019).

The main reason why D-8 countries do not have a trade surplus is that they offer services with low added value compared to Western countries. Emphasizing the importance of having high value-added production, D-8 Secretary-General Shari stated that they are preparing to establish centers of excellence to increase their production and service capacities, especially agriculture (UNCTAD, 2019). However, when we look at the resources and potentials of D-8, we encounter important data. As of 2019, the total population of D-8 countries is 1,1 billion, its economic size is 3,7 trillion dollars and its export volume is approximately 700 million dollars. It accounts for 4% of the global trade of \$ 16,4 trillion. D-8 countries cover 15% of proven oil reserves and 23% of proven natural gas reserves (Mercan, 2019).

## 5. SUMMITS AND DECISIONS TAKEN

Organizing its first summit in Istanbul in 1997, the organization was held in Dhaka in March 1999, Cairo in February 2001, Tehran in February 2004, Bali in May 2006, Kuala Lumpur in July 2008. Held in Abuja in July 2010, in Islamabad in November 2012 and Istanbul in October 2017 (Mercan, 2019).

**1. 1997 Istanbul Summit:** D-8 organization held its first meeting in Istanbul on June 15, 1997, when the founding announcement was made. Member countries' organization; they have determined the principle, purpose, function and basic objectives. Presidents of all member states were present at the first meeting in Istanbul (Taştekin, 2006, p.231).

**2. 1999 Dhaka Summit:** The Bangladesh summit, held on March 1-2, 1999, was held in the capital city of Dhaka. Trade financing, banking transactions and visa procedures were discussed for the convenience of business people. A decision was also made to establish a permanent unit to act as a secretariat (Şahin, 2012, p.128).

**3. 2001 Cairo Summit:** It was stated at the Cairo summit that the trade volume in D-8 should be doubled within five years. It has been emphasized that member countries should support the industry and technology data bank network carried out by Iran (Öztaş, 2019, 10). It has been recommended to work on agricultural issues such as the preparation of rural development in Bangladesh, to make preparations to the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Turkey, to have made efforts to reduce poverty in Indonesia, making preparations to customize Malaysia, Nigeria and energy working group to deal with the meeting, fertilizing Pakistan (Kılınç, 2013, p.41).

**4. 2004 Tehran Summit:** The fourth Summit of Heads of State will be held in Indonesia in 2003, but could not be realized due to various problems. The summit was held in Tehran, the capital of Iran, on February 18, 2004 (Öztaş, 2019, p.10). With the thought of maintaining the speed in cooperation of D-8s, it was stated that the commission should hold regular meetings twice a year, as stated in the "Structure and Operation" document, and the studies on Preferential Trade Agreements were discussed. It has been requested to accelerate the entry into force of the Treaty facilitating visa procedures for business people. The most important outcome of this summit was the opinion that the organization's efforts until that date were insufficient (Güldal, 2009, p.88-90).

**5. 2006 Bali Summit:** D-8, the foundations of which were laid under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan based on Islamic reference, took an idle position

after Erbakan was out of politics, and no concrete steps could be taken despite the organization's summit meetings. The idea of including D-8 in important projects in regional relations was realized by the AK Party government. In this regard, the first important step was taken at the Summit meeting in Indonesia in 2006. Preferential Trade Agreement was signed between the member countries at the Summit meeting in Indonesia and brought the systematic potential to the organization (Köktaş, 2018, p.59-60).

**6. 2008 Kuala Lumpur Summit:** Held on July 8, 2008 in Kuala Lumpur a city of Malaysia. At this summit, the balance sheets of the 10 years left behind by the D-8 Economic Cooperation Organization were discussed and the second decade was planned. In addition, the status of the D-8 Secretariat has been approved and accepted by member countries (Öztaş, 2019, p.11). At this summit, an agreement to facilitate visa procedures for business people was signed by member countries, and it was decided to convene a summit for SME policies of countries in 2009. Also among countries, cooperation studies in fields such as fruit, vegetable, greenhouse cultivation and seeding have been proposed (Şahin, 2012, p.130).

**7. 2010 Abuja Summit:** The Seventh Summit of D-8 was held on July 8, 2010 in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. D-8 held its 30th Commission Meeting and 14th Council of Ministers at the Abuja Summit. The most important theme of the Summit was to increase investment cooperation among D-8 members (Kılınç, 2013, p.44).

**8. 2012 Islamabad Summit:** The turning point of the organizational history was the eighth D-8 Summit held in Pakistan's capital Islamabad on November 22, 2012 (Köktaş, 2018, p.60). At the summit, the "D-8 Economic Cooperation Charter" was signed, aiming the organization to achieve a comprehensive road map based on a strong foundation and institutional coordination. However, at the summit, '2012 Islamabad Democratic Partnership Declaration for Peace and Welfare' was published and "2012-2030 D-8 Global Vision Document" was declared (Eighth D-8 Summit, 2012). As a result of the dynamism brought to the organization, the trade volume of 20 billion dollars in 1997 increased to 120 billion dollars in 2017.

**9. 2017 Istanbul Summit:** October 20 2017 was organized in Istanbul in Turkey. Turkey took over the D-8 Presidency from Pakistan in this summit. Since the 20th summit of the organization was the anniversary of the organization, it was realized with the theme of "Increasing Opportunities Through Cooperation"

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). In addition, it was emphasized that the “D-8 Istanbul Action Plan” was accepted and efforts will continue to improve tourism. It has been discussed that agricultural cooperation will be given importance to science and technology. It has been emphasized that energy is necessary for economic growth and continuity has been emphasized in developing cooperation (Öztaş, 2019, p.13).

## CONCLUSION

The end of the Cold War, when the international system was divided into two, allowed countries to diversify their single-focus foreign policies. In this context Turkey, Asia and Africa laid the foundations of the expansion fulfilling the objectives of D-8 organization. D-8, founded by the Istanbul Declaration, led by the then Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, is a formation that prioritizes peace, justice, equality, development and prosperity, but consists of 8 Islamic countries. However, the religious factor is not important in becoming a member of the organization. Every developing country can become a member of D-8 provided that it adheres to the principles of the organization.

D-8 members; Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh. Geopolitical locations of the member countries; It cuts Asia, Africa and Europe in the form of a bow and is a bridge. In addition, their rich energy resources, large population, and favorable market potential provide the organization with a strategic advantage within the international system. D-8, which makes sectoral cooperation in areas such as trade, industry, transportation, agriculture and food security, energy and mines, has created such cooperation areas according to the expertise areas of the member countries. Having realized its first and last summit in Istanbul, D-8 has held 9 summit meetings in total and determined long-term road maps.

The D-8 organization is of paramount importance in the international and political system, with its dynamic population, resources, strategic location and economic potential. However, the D-8 organization could not get the political and economic value of its advantages at an adequate level and could not evaluate its potential efficiently. Slowness in its functioning has been a major obstacle to the solution of problems and decisions that will affect the global system have not been implemented adequately. In addition, the geographical distance of the member countries to each other and the desire to solve their problems through

organizations such as the United Nations, NATO and ASEAN, have also created factors for not being able to put the potential of D-8 into practice.

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