

## ARTICLE

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# Turkic World Vision–2040: A Step Forward for the Resilience of Turkic Cooperation

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### Abstract

*The article explores the “Turkic World Vision–2040” adopted during the Istanbul Summit held on November 12, 2021 by the Heads of States of the Organization of the Turkic States (OTS) through the lense of the theory of resilience. This Summit was historical in many terms where the name of this institutionalized regional cooperation mechanism changed from Cooperation of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) to OTS, modalities for observership and partnership were adopted and Turkmenistan became an observer to the Organization. As one the staunch outcomes of the Summit, “Turkic World Vision–2040” constitutes the first strategic document of the Organization established in 2009 with the Nakhchivan Agreement. Touching upon the turbulence through which the international system is passing today and the accompanying need for better global governance, the article first touches upon the basic elements of the theory of resilience, then turns to the vision documents prepared by international actors to offer resilient solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow. Next, the structure of the OTS vision document is examined, together with its linkages to resiliency. Finally, the article discusses what “Turkic World Vision–2040” brings to the ongoing Turkic cooperation in terms of resilience.*

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Received on: 02.02.2022  
Accepted on: 27.05.2022

## Keywords

Organization of Turkic States, Turkic World Vision–2040, resilience, Turkic cooperation, global governance.

## Introduction

The famous first lines of *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens aptly describes the status of the international system as we know it today as also acknowledged by H.E. Minister Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye in his opening address at the annual Antalya Diplomacy Forum in 2022: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.”<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, we have all the capabilities necessary to run a workable global order. On the other hand, even the territorial integrity of sovereign states can be questioned under today’s pressing circumstances. Instead of moving ahead toward an empowerment of the rules-based international order, there is a strong trend of regression regarding international law and values. While there is ample room to make the international order more inclusive, representative and resilient, debates on the enlargement of “spheres of influence” have resumed, as if there is a new chessboard on the table. In addition to these challenges, the Russia-Ukraine war has disrupted several geopolitical and geo-economic calculations at both the regional and global level, constituting another turning point in the history of international relations bringing with it a wide range of repercussions and severe humanitarian, military, economic and food security challenges.

The international system had already been experiencing severe turbulence, especially in the last twenty years, and the recent outbreak of COVID-19 and the unpreparedness to manage it have crowned it. The quest for building resilient societies, states and a more representative international order has already been one of the most debated topics of the global agenda for decades. As modern challenges to international development and security become more complex, interrelated and unpredictable than ever, the notion of “resilience” has gained further ground in the literature of international relations (IR). In this fragile scaffold of global order, international organizations have begun to adopt new

strategies to adapt to the new realities of today's global system. Therefore, the period of 2020–2022 is emerging as a time of renewed visions with new projections for the future. For instance, “2030 NATO: United for a New Era” report which constitutes the basis of NATO's new strategic concept adopted in June 2022 during the NATO Summit in Madrid, is among these new vision papers. Prepared by a high-level, independent expert group appointed by the NATO Secretary-General, the report presents a wake-up call for the Alliance to recalibrate for future uncertainties, and prepared for “a world of competing great powers.”<sup>2</sup> This timely report makes countless references to “resilience” and “the importance of building resilient societies” to counter today's security challenges and ensure the development of global governance that goes hand in hand with it.

Following the Strategic Concept endeavors of NATO, the EU has also engaged in the preparation of strategic documents. The “EU Global Strategy”, drafted by Nathalie Tocci, Special Advisor to the Former High Representative of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission Frederica Mogherini, and published in 2016, was a remarkable work in this direction. The strategy not only focuses on EU issues, but places special emphasis on the potential and prospects of resilience in the EU's global role”—zooming inward toward resilience within the EU and zooming outward toward resilience in the multilateral system.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the “EU Global Strategy” elevated resilience to one of the EU's top priorities.<sup>4</sup> Tocci presents a self-critique of the EU's implementation of resilience in her article. Thus, the EU launched preparation of a new strategic document, resulting in the release of its “Global Compass 2022”, approved at the EU Foreign Affairs Council on March 21, 2022.<sup>5</sup> This document again makes reference to resilience, albeit to a lesser degree compared to the previous one. Nevertheless, it focuses on giving the EU an ambitious plan of action for strengthening the EU's security and defense policy by 2030. It is important to note that, the document misses the truth and reality and myopically views Türkiye, a candidate country and NATO ally, from such a shallow perspective, particularly in the chapter on the Eastern Mediterranean, where there is a persistent denial of Türkiye's rights and those of the Turkish Cypriots, in full contradiction of international law, practice and even the EU's own *acquis*.<sup>6</sup>

Contributing to the efforts of strategic thinking taking place at the global level, the Heads of States of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) that was named before the Council of Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) adopted “Turkic World Vision–2040” during the historical Istanbul Summit hosted by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, on November 12, 2021. This is the first strategic document prepared since the OTS’ establishment as the Turkic Council in 2009. As such, it constitutes an important opening for the organization as a real pledge for the upcoming two decades. The preparation of this document was commissioned during the Baku Summit on October 15, 2019, hosted by H.E. İlham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, upon the proposal of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It was eventually based on the stipulations of the Nakhchivan Agreement adopted in 2009 as the founding document that set the tone for the institutionalization of cooperation among the Turkic States.<sup>7</sup>

The collapse of the Soviet Union had paved the way for the emergence of five new independent Turkic States: the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. With its background of Summit Process dating back to the 1990s, this emergence resulted in the awakening of a long-awaited Turkic cooperation. However, the achievement of this cooperation was not as easy as it had been dreamed of and projected for. The individual conditions of the Turkic States, along with regional circumstances and global calculations were not ready for the initiation of such cooperation in its full expression.<sup>8</sup> However, the establishment of the Turkic Council with its permanent Secretariat based in Istanbul and its achievements in a relatively short period of time soon gained it popularity on the international scene.<sup>9</sup> This led to the accession of Uzbekistan as a Member State in 2019, as well as Hungary and Turkmenistan as observer states in 2018 and in 2022, respectively. The organization’s scope of cooperation increased throughout the years in line with the changing needs of its Member States and the developments at both regional and global level. In this regard, the recent historical Istanbul Summit was dedicated to theme of “Green Technologies and Smart Cities”, in true resonance with the global agenda.<sup>10</sup>

The Istanbul Summit was a historical event in many respects: the name of the Turkic Council was changed to the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), the adaption of the document regarding the modalities of observership and partnership opened a new page for the organization, and Turkmenistan became an observer state, completing the OTS' roster of former Soviet Turkic states. Above all, however, the most important development of the Istanbul Summit was the adoption of the "Turkic World Vision-2040". This first strategic document of the organization took more than a year to prepare, and is the outcome of the tremendous efforts of the Secretariat, the contributions of the Member States and

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the guidance of Türkiye's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which assumed the chairmanship of the organization just after the Istanbul Summit. The implementation of the vision document will be framed and detailed in a series of strategic road maps to be renewed every five years in line with the priorities of the organization. The "First Road Map 2022-2026" is expected to be approved later in 2022 as an implementation framework. When we look into the details of the "Turkic World Vision-2040", we find clues about the background of the establishment of

the organization, its aims and values, its areas of collaboration, its enlargement process, its cooperation with international actors and its contributions to inter-regionalism together with the future measures to be taken to empower the Turkic cooperation.

In the light of above-mentioned issues, in this article, we will analyze the "Turkic World Vision-2040" through the lens of the theory of resilience. We will first touch upon the basic elements of the theory of resilience; next we will examine the structure of the document together with its linkages to resiliency; then, we will explore the new openings the vision document presents for Turkic cooperation in terms of resilience.

## Resilience: A Smart Way of Thinking & Dynamic Process

Resilience derives from the Latin verb *resilire*, meaning “to bounce back from damage”.<sup>11</sup> It is not of course a new phenomenon, but there is no doubt that its initial definition has expanded throughout the years. The concept of resilience as we use it today originated in ecology in the 1970s as the ability “to absorb changes of variables and parameters”; it then penetrated in other disciplines, from psychology and economics to the social sciences.<sup>12</sup> In recent years, the concept of resilience has become particularly interlinked with governance, especially in IR.<sup>13</sup> During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the term “resilient power”, which refers to a nation’s ability to adapt itself to changing conditions and renew its capabilities, gained traction.<sup>14</sup> Before the emphasis on the subject matter, the concept has already entered into the literature of IR with regard to global governance.<sup>15</sup> The concept has been more and more problematized in the framework of the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations, through its linkages to issues such as good governance, sustainable development, security, urban planning, peace-keeping and the management of humanitarian crises.<sup>16</sup>

Impressively, all of the major international actors, including the UN, the UN Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), NATO and the EU make strong reference to the importance of resilience in their respective.<sup>17</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which constitute important targets to make the world more livable leave no one behind, repeat the term resilience countless times in the descriptions of each of the 17 targets.<sup>18</sup> Resilience is thus considered essential for the implementation of the 2030 Global Sustainable Agenda.<sup>19</sup>

There is also an ongoing debate as to whether the increasing role of resilience in governance and security discourse is too Western-oriented. Critics argue that the concept of resilience has become a component of neo-liberalism, ignoring the self-governance methods of the rest of the world.<sup>20</sup> However, this does not seem as a relevant criticism and constitutes rather a biased approach as several documents of other organizations such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC),<sup>21</sup>

the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO),<sup>22</sup> the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN),<sup>23</sup> the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU),<sup>24</sup> the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)<sup>25</sup> and the African Union (AU),<sup>26</sup> whose member states do not always follow a neo-liberal approach, make reference to the importance of resilience in their policy documents.

Depending on the disciplines, contexts and situations in which it is evoked, the concept of resilience has a number of different, in some cases multifaceted meanings. Thus, resilience discussions tackle a variety of themes, from politics, the economy, sustainable development, counter-terrorism, energy supply security and cyber security to disaster risk-management and climate change, together with all their domestic and external dynamics.<sup>27</sup> Clearly, resilience is not a static concept but rather is in perpetual movement.<sup>28</sup> As a multi-layered phenomenon, resilience is described and implemented differently in various fields and branches of academia. Yet overall, resilience is characterized as “the capacity to adapt, respond, react and bounce back in the aftermath of shocks and crises in a timely and efficient manner.”<sup>29</sup> Taking into consideration that resilience has become a commonplace concept in our daily lives, it is also about preparedness, responsiveness and agility, as well as the implementation of adequate policies for prevention and management.

The latter definition places a special emphasis on empowerment and capacity-building.<sup>30</sup> Truly being resilient at the policy level necessitates not only a system of a certain quality, but also effective processes of governance in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment at both the local and global level. For this reason, providing a link between local and global phenomena is of utmost importance in facilitating change, mitigating complexity and managing unpredictability.<sup>31</sup> Thus, local and global governance are certainly inseparable from each other; this necessitates cultivating qualities of resilience across different sectorial policies. This is directly related to frame resilient, sustainable and robust institutions that are the *sine quo non* of rules-based international order.

Resilience is not of course only about structuring resilient institutions but also about building resilient societies. Therefore, observing, preventing, responding, repairing the imbalances of governance, man-

aging, recovering and ensuring post-recovery constitute the essence of resilience-thinking, whatever subject is at stake. When it comes to cooperation, whether at the regional or global level, the term is usually accompanied by key words such as partnering and shouldering, often through innovative, comprehensive and mutual-learning methods supported by capacity-building activities in order to secure a workable global governance system. With all of these features, resilience is certainly a dynamic process: there is no-one-size-fits-all resiliency. Because of its responsiveness to local conditions, resilience cannot necessarily be exported from one locale to another. Yet because of our increasing interconnectedness, resilience has a global reach and effect, and should be based on universal values and rules with a human-centered approach.

In IR, there is an organic linkage between resilience and good governance that can be summarized as “a process of decision-making that is accountable, transparent, just, responsive and participatory.”<sup>32</sup> Establishing good governance at the national level requires building inclusive, prosperous and secure institutions and societies. Implementing tailor-made policies to meet the dire needs of everyday people, building on social capital, securing connectedness based on a resilient economy, engaging all reliable actors and institutions in harmony, ensuring effective and responsive delivery of public services, developing good communication skills and mobilizing all the potential for cooperation among all of these actors are among the key concepts to bolster the linkage between good governance and resilience.<sup>33</sup> And as long as resilience within states is well-built, resilience at the regional level will be enhanced. In this regard, regional organizations such as the OTS assume an important responsibility; promoting resilience at the regional level will have a *domino effect* to enhance global resilience within the multilateral system in a rules-based order. A constructive, comprehensive and inclusive approach to be applied at regional level would promote a resilient multilateralism where discussions regarding reforms of the UN and its Security Council would be much more tempered and productive. Thus, international organizations within the multilateral system can ensure their relevance and thus their perpetuation through institutional transformation in line with the necessities of the day by adapting to the environment they face.<sup>34</sup>



## Turkic World Vision–2040: An Ambitious Pledge for the Future

“Turkic World Vision–2040” was adopted at the 8<sup>th</sup> historical Istanbul Summit of the OTS, more than twelve years since the establishment of this regional cooperation organization. The 2009 Nakhchivan Agreement constitutes the beginning of this institutionalized collaborative pathway leading to today’s cooperation scheme, which has yielded remarkable achievements in a short period of time.<sup>35</sup> Equipped with adequate instruments in its toolkit, the OTS has been instrumental in increasing cooperation among the Turkic States in a wide range of areas. The declarations adopted at the annual Summits by the Heads of State have provided the compass of this cooperation. Furthermore, the activities and projects implemented by the Secretariat have been applauded by the international community, as indicated in the 2017 report of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, titled “How the Turkic Council Uses South-South Cooperation to Promote Regional and Global Development”.<sup>36</sup> So what was the relevance of preparing such a vision document and why it is important in terms of resilience?

While the founding Nakhchivan Agreement framed the members’ ideal of a regional cooperation mechanism, changes in the needs of the Member States, across the region, and developments in the international system throughout the following years called upon the OTS Member States to envision an enhanced Turkic cooperation in a more structured way. “Turkic World Vision–2040” presents, in 17 pages, a summary of the accumulation of the OTS’ past achievements, the organization’s commitments and instructions and lays out the OTS’ vision for a long-term approach to ongoing Turkic cooperation. It is organized into four sections or ‘pillars’ in line with the existing cooperation mechanisms within the OTS: (1) political and security cooperation; (2) economic and sectoral cooperation, including economics, transport and customs, information and communications technology (ICT), energy, tourism, health, environment and agriculture; (3) people-to-people contact, which includes areas such as culture, education and science, youth and sports, diaspora, information and media, as well as cooperation with civil societies; and finally (4) cooperation with external parties, which includes cooperation with international organizations, and humanitarian and development cooperation.<sup>37</sup>

The introduction to “Turkic World Vision–2040” begins with a statement of the document’s necessity: “We are living in an age that requires a strategic vision to recognize and address the rapid changes worldwide and their impact on us.”<sup>38</sup> It highlights the need for Member States to adapt themselves, their societies and institutions to the emerging global realities. The numerous references made to preparedness, resilience, capacity for adaptation and transformation across a spectrum of political, economic to cultural domains emphasize the importance that the organization attributes to this outcome. Cooperative mechanisms and joint projects within the OTS, the pooling of experiences and the sharing of material and intellectual resources when needed are considered essential instruments for a robust and transparent platform of growing cooperation and solidarity within the Turkic world. What is striking is the awareness within the document that the ongoing process of adaptation needs to be supported by a forward-looking and realistic vision. In this vein, it aims “to develop such a framework to support the capacity of its members to address, individually and collectively, the challenges of our time.”<sup>39</sup> It acknowledges the high stakes in play for regional organizations such as the OTS to render the international system more effective, cooperative and representative. “Turkic World Vision–2040” intends to provide direction “for individual and joint action by the member states to further build their administrative capacities to serve the needs and aspirations of their people” and expresses the OTS’ promise to “render each Member State stronger nationally and stronger as a group, without prejudice to their already existing international commitments.”<sup>40</sup> Referring to the fraternal affinities between the Member States, the document does not forget that positive engagement with other countries and international organizations constitutes a key course of action for the organization.

Following the introduction, after commending the OTS’ achievements to enhance cooperation and solidarity among the Turkic states and

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their people since its establishment based on historical ties, common language, culture and traditions, the Heads of State of the Member States reiterate their political will “to deepen the ongoing institutionalized Turkic cooperation in line with the stipulations of the Nakhchivan Agreement and the Organization of Turkic States Summit Declarations, in close coordination with the other Turkic Cooperation Organizations.”<sup>41</sup> It reaffirms the OTS’ robust adherence to “the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other universally recognized principles and norms of international law, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of states.”<sup>42</sup> Indeed, these key concepts constitute the backbone of the spirit of cooperation within the OTS.<sup>43</sup>

Underlining that the multi-layered, systemized and structured multilateral cooperation within the OTS, based on equality, mutual confidence and shared benefit would continue to yield positive outcomes for Turkic states and Turkic people and others, “Turkic World Vision–2040” attributes special importance to the essential components of resilience: good-governance, pluralism, inclusiveness, accountability and transparency in building and maintaining resilient societies. Moreover, the desire “to ensure cooperation with regional and international organizations as well as partners for enhancing development, peace, stability and prosperity worldwide through the development of a comprehensive and inclusive global governance approach with adequate mechanisms” bolsters the resilient-thinking character of this document.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, it illustrates a decisive call “to secure the reform and efficient functioning of the international system.”<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, pointing out the necessity of ensuring preparedness, the accent placed on taking joint action to meet the current and emerging global challenges while working for the achievement of the SDGs is of utmost importance, not only for rendering the member, observer and partner states more resilient, but also for building resilient societies. The commitment to strengthen people-to-people interaction and cooperation among the citizens of Turkic states for their active participation in Turkic cooperation and for framing their shared future presents a firm step to be taken to this end.<sup>46</sup> Within this framework, the document describes the OTS as “a responsible and responsive regional actor that keeps its door open for new and innovative cooperation areas of common interest among the Member States as well as other regional and international actors.”<sup>47</sup>

Before engaging in the four pillars of the Vision, the document next presents the elements that will guide the next phase of the OTS' priorities, evolution and direction in the upcoming two decades, and the Heads of State declare their continuing commitment to this unique cooperation. Reflecting their dedication to resilience-thinking, the Heads of State pledge “to channel the cooperative synergy of the Member States and their people to contribute to developing and protecting global common goods and build a more representative and participatory international order with adequate cooperation mechanisms,” while “using the cooperative platform of the Organization to strengthen governance and to raise the political, economic and social standards of their societies.”<sup>48</sup> The aim of “supporting economic, social, and institutional reforms in the Member States to avoid socioeconomic precarity, upholding human dignity and building a more prosperous community of Turkic countries” are equally significant to this end.<sup>49</sup> The items that are *sine quo non* to build resilient nations and societies are also enshrined in the Vision document. This involves “promoting democratic governance as a general principle while respecting the circumstances of each Member State to advance on this path” and “strengthening good governance with all its aspects including human rights, rule of law, inclusive institutions, transparency, efficiency, accountability and fighting corruption for the socioeconomic development and prosperity of the peoples of the Member States.”<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, “promoting human security, equality between men and women, as well as women and youth empowerment in our societies” are significant components of resilience necessary to prepare future generations with this line of understanding, as described in the document.<sup>51</sup>

Economic resilience is another subject that “Turkic World Vision–2040” broadly touches upon in this part of the document with a sectoral approach. Indeed, the Vision encapsulates ambitious aspects to deepen economic cooperation between the Member States.<sup>52</sup> In this regard, it emphasizes the utmost importance of deepening economic cooperation and interaction among the Member States by harmonizing national economic development policies through regular dialogue and experience sharing, increasing the trade volume among the Member States through policies aimed at increasing trade complementarities, facilitating trade and eliminating quantitative restrictions and non-tar-

iff barriers to trade, transforming the Member States into a vigorous regional economic group linking East and West, North and South trade corridors contributing to regional and global economic stability.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, the issue of “creating seamless, integrated, efficient, fast and sustainable multimodal connectivity among the Member States by simplifying and harmonizing customs and transit procedures for border crossings, liberalizing their transport sectors, including transit passes” has a wide coverage in the document.<sup>54</sup> This aims “to accelerate transport operations with minimum logistical costs, and eradicate the non-physical barriers to efficient, stable, fast and seamless transport across the Trans-Caspian International East-West Middle Corridor (TITR).”<sup>55</sup> Thus, ensuring connectedness is among the issues that the organization repeatedly takes up to reach a resilient regional economy.<sup>56</sup>

The Vision further refers to contemporary concepts such as establishing intra-regional digital connectivity, supporting the fourth Industrial Revolution in the Member States and ensuring better integration with the global knowledge-based economy through the use of Big Data and digital technologies as well as artificial intelligence in various fields to support transformation into digital, green, smart economies and smart cities. From enhancing cooperation in satellite technology to promoting partnerships between space agencies and relevant institutions, “Turkic World Vision–2040” touches upon several critical areas in compliance with today’s necessities.<sup>57</sup>

On the other hand, as mentioned in the Vision, the OTS has already made significant progress in transforming the OTS region into a center of tourism to better utilize its rich cultural and historical heritage as well as the natural attractions of the Member States through new joint tourism projects, and diversifying tourism destinations along the ancient Silk Road for fully tapping their tourism potential.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the commitment to “maintaining health cooperation as a priority agenda item among the Member States to achieve universal health coverage, access to quality essential healthcare services as well as to safe, effective, quality, affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic” stands as a decisive projection for preparedness with regard to continued and deepening cooperation on health.<sup>59</sup>

For the first time within the history of the OTS, in line with the theme of the 8<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Summit, environmental issues are emphasized in all relevant areas of the “Turkic World Vision–2040”. Accordingly, there is firm pledge “to ensure sustainable agriculture, self-sufficiency and food security in the OTS region through agricultural cooperation together with capacity building and technology transfer programs and partnerships with an emphasis on founding environmentally friendly, sustainable and organic solutions,” which we need more than ever today. All of these commitments present remarkable attempts to render the Member States and their societies more resilient across various crucial sectors.<sup>60</sup>

In terms of people-to-people cooperation, “Turkic World Vision–2040” presents the OTS’ commitment to achieve further harmonization of the national cultural, educational and youth policies, build capacity to achieve unity in alphabet and terminology for enabling better communication among the Member States and make the OTS region a center of academic and scientific research, learning and innovation.<sup>61</sup> The Vision describes youth cooperation “as an essential element of comprehensive intra-regional cooperation through joint projects on youth mobility, exchange and education together with pledges to make additional efforts to prevent youth from the threat of radicalization and violent extremism.”<sup>62</sup> The OTS has already made significant efforts in the field of youth cooperation over the past several years.<sup>63</sup> Relatedly, commitments such as ensuring the active participation, engagement and integration of the Turkic diaspora communities in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the countries where they reside and securing institutionalized cooperation among TV, news agencies and media outlets while joining efforts to tackle disinformation and infollution are also beneficial to increase regional resilience by deepening connectedness at the societal level.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, “strengthening the role and activities of the OTS as a responsible and cooperative regional actor at national, regional and international levels through public diplomacy programs and activities” constitutes an important part of the Vision to raise awareness about the activities of the OTS to render its members’ societies more resilient and to ensure the resiliency of future generations.<sup>65</sup>

Cooperation with external actors is also crucial to enhance resilience at the global level, as the document intends. Therefore, “Turkic World Vision–2040” accentuates the OTS’ commitment to enhance cooperation with international and regional organizations that share common interests to contribute to global governance. This can be realized by “keeping up with the global agenda of cooperation through collaboration with the UN, its bodies and specialized agencies as well as other relevant international organizations based on the requirements of regional and global ownership.”<sup>66</sup> Commitments such as “to render the multilateral system more resilient through working together on the need for UN reform, as well as on the attainment of internationally agreed development goals” together with the targets “to implement joint development and aid programs and projects for responding to the dire needs of the developing and least developed countries across the world” are among the crucial targets of the OTS to achieve this end.<sup>67</sup>

Recalling the ecological connotation of the term resilience, the pledge “to develop programs and projects to prevent and respond to natural disasters in the organization’s domain and across the world, and coordinate joint initiatives and actions for disaster relief in affected areas” represents another important dimension among the commitments of the OTS to enhance preparedness and ability to withstand such shocks.<sup>68</sup>

Last but not least, promoting effective coordination and cooperation

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among the relevant authorities of the Member States on issues of migration and displacement constitutes an important needed reality that the Vision highlights in compliance with the aim of developing a more resolute regional and global approach to this trans-boundary issue.<sup>69</sup>

In the part concerning the four pillars of the Vision, the above-mentioned commitments are expressed in detail and accompanied by an illustrated road map.

Instead of zooming in on each pillar, in the next part of the article, we will focus on the new light that the Vision brings to Turkic cooperation in terms of resilience.

### Turkic World Vision–2040: Aspects of Further Resilience

Before its name change from Turkic Council to OTS and the adoption of “Turkic World Vision–2040”, this regional cooperation mechanism had been already operating through a well-established working group and Ministerial meeting mechanisms involving actors from the public and private sectors when needed. The dedication of each annual Summit to a specific theme of cooperation enlarged the organization’s scope of collaboration. As an umbrella organization of Turkic cooperation with a result-oriented, comprehensive and inclusive approach, the OTS has already contributed to the development of solidarity among the Turkic States and across the region. From diplomacy to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), tourism to transport and customs, youth to health and media, education to media and diaspora, the OTS has been carrying out capacity-building programs and benefiting from the comparative advantages of its Member and Observer States. Within this framework, “pragmatic economic interests have played a more important role than ideological concerns in the development of the OTS.”<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, its ongoing cooperation with UN agencies and bodies, as well as with other international and regional organizations sharing common goals, has already positioned the OTS among the promising regional institutional mechanisms contributing to the empowerment of global governance.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, one might say that a resilience-oriented approach is already in the genes of the OTS. “Turkic World Vision–2040” brings further dynamic resiliency to the projects and programs that the OTS is already carrying out while paving the way for the development of adequate tools to equip the organization with resilient solutions to the issues on its agenda of cooperation. Moreover, “Turkic World Vision-2040” provides a strategic perspective to the OTS to shape its future, based on its ongoing rules and values, but in a more innovative, comprehensive and smart manner in line with the requirements of our time.<sup>72</sup> Within this framework,



each of the document's sub-sections contains references to resiliency. In this regard, further emphasis is placed on the harmonization of policies and regulations on sectoral cooperation areas with adequate up-to-date means, stimulation of digitalization in each area of cooperation with the power of Big Data, better use of smart technologies, support to entrepreneurship with a reference to young and women entrepreneurs, implementation of environmentally friendly, green solutions, and the development of accountability and sustainability. These are indispensable components of enhancing resiliency. Moreover, the enhancement of knowledge experience and capacity building, and ensuring preparedness in a wide range of cooperation areas from health to disaster management are emphasized, with the aim of rendering the OTS more robust to potential shocks and crises.<sup>73</sup>

From contributing to the green economy and low-carbon development to jointly promoting sustainable rural development programs and effective intellectual property protection, "Turkic World Vision-2040" calls repeated attention to the importance of resilient-thinking and acting. For example, in the pillar of "political and security cooperation", it makes a firm pledge for "strengthening the regular mechanism of multilateral political consultations among the Member States on international and regional foreign policy issues of common interest while increasing synergy among national institutions and other stakeholders to achieve the targets of OTS to leverage Turkic cooperation."<sup>74</sup> This commitment constitutes an important proof that the Organization is seeking to enhance its resiliency with regard to the empowerment of cooperation in foreign policy areas. Upon the call of Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, the OTS had organized an extraordinary meet-

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ing to take up the developments in Afghanistan on September 27, 2021, after which a joint statement was released, before the adoption of "Turkic World Vision-2040".<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OTS, upon the initiative of Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, acting as Chairperson in Office of

the Organization, held an extraordinary video-conference meeting on January 11, 2022 to discuss the recent developments in Kazakhstan.<sup>76</sup> In addition to the regular meetings of Foreign Ministers, the OTS has already accelerated its efforts to voice joint positions on issues of common interest. The OTS is on a path to empower political resilience among its Member and Observer States.

References made to “the improvement of professional skills of public entities in good governance and public service delivery, strengthening of rule of law, judicial systems and legal infrastructure and institutional capacities in Member States” perfectly dovetail with the endeavor to render regional cooperation more resilient.<sup>77</sup> With this aim, “strengthening the Representation Office of Organization of OTS in Budapest as a hub for developing multi-layered cooperation with European institutions including the Visegrád Group” constitutes a significant target to bolster cooperation between the OTS and European institutions on issues of mutual interest.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the pledge “to carry out tangible joint projects with international and regional organizations that share common goals to contribute to the global governance” indicates that the Organization will continue to track the global agenda very closely.<sup>79</sup>

When it comes to security cooperation, the OTS’ focus is “on building a network for cooperation and information-sharing among the Member States to combat the threats of radicalization, violent extremism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and terrorism, and to ensure border security.”<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, “carrying out effective cooperation and coordination among law enforcement authorities to combat transnational organized crime, including illegal drug trade, irregular migration, human trafficking, illicit arms trade, organ trafficking, economic, financial and cybercrimes as well as illegal migration” are equally important in enhancing security cooperation in the region and for empowering the resilience of the Turkic States in the mentioned fields.<sup>81</sup>

The section of the document that addresses economic and sectoral cooperation is quite long and detailed. What is pressing here, is the strong commitment to “work toward the achievement of free movement of commodities, capital, services, technologies and people among the Member States.”<sup>82</sup> Supporting the development of SMEs in the Member and Observer States and mobilizing resources to be allocated to the

development of joint projects are other important issues touched upon in this part of the document. For more than two years, the OTS has been working on the establishment of the Turkic Investment Fund to be operationalized as a significant step toward boosting economic cooperation between the Member and Observer States for these particular reasons.<sup>83</sup>

Digitalization, in the context of several economic and financial issues, is also of utmost importance for the OTS. In this regard, prioritizing the diversification of economic activities to increase the resiliency with a focus on evolving digital technologies, cooperating to build a future knowledge economy, generate opportunities and enhance infrastructure for greater production capabilities in different sectors constitute specific, achievable targets to be reached by joining efforts. Specific reference is made to nurture policies for “sustainable, green, innovative, smart, and inclusive economic growth while preserving macroeconomic and financial stability” and “to prepare a favorable environment for the development of start-ups and innovative entrepreneurship and expanding the network of incubators among the Member States,” indicating that the OTS is fully aware of the need for global economic resilience and has a realistic strategy for its development vis-à-vis economic and financial issues.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the Vision makes a significant pledge for “jointly promoting the Zangezur Corridor at various international economic platforms” to enhance regional economic and logistic connectivity; this corridor has become a significant cooperation issue since the glorious 44 Days Victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.<sup>85</sup>

Among other sectors of cooperation, the environment has an innovative share in the Vision document and this is the first time that the OTS has been vocal in its commitment “to give priority to environmental protection in the national and joint policies of the Member States and take necessary measures to increase societal awareness on this global challenge.”<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the announcement of the establishment of a “Turkic Council Civil Protection Mechanism” to take joint action to prevent and respond to natural and manmade disasters and to mitigate their effects while working on recovery is another important contribution to the preparedness aspect of the OTS’ emphasis on resilience. This on-call mechanism, whose regulatory documents are under prepa-

ration, will provide a concrete cooperation mechanism through which the peoples of the OTS will benefit when needed. The OTS pledge to increase cooperation in this area matches well with the “Drought Prevention Center” proposed by Hungary to be established in addition to the OTS Representation Office in Budapest.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, although there is no reference to it in the Vision, this goes hand-in-hand with the document’s spirit with regard to environmental protection as a sign of the OTS’s further engagement in the fight against climate change and its devastating consequences.

In addition to environmental issues, “Turkic World Vision–2040” touches upon on food security as another important challenge facing the world today. It details the means to carry out cooperation in agriculture, an important aspect of resilient economies and societies.<sup>88</sup> References made to “the achievement of digital connectivity through the effective use of space technologies within the ICT cooperation” are also remarkable in terms of enlarging the scope of cooperation to such an important area that requires resiliency.<sup>89</sup> The call for “harmonizing national space policies and establishing result-oriented cooperation among the Member States through joint programs” and the intention to “share space-based data for resource management, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development” indicates that even the sky is not the limit for enhancing collaboration within the OTS.<sup>90</sup>

In terms of ideas to build resilient societies, the Vision is very generous in its pillar of people-to-people cooperation in culture, education and science, to youth and sports, diaspora, and information and media cooperation. In each area of this cooperation sphere, “Turkic World Vision–2040” emphasizes the importance of raising Turkic generations who are aware of the necessity of national, regional and global good governance directly linked to the concept of resilience. In addition to this, the Vision seeks to foster an “enabling environment for networking, and supporting the joint work of civil society organizations with the aim of strengthening dialogue among them and ensuring their active engagement in the socio-economic and political development of their countries.”<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, it urges “the involvement of civil societies in the activities of OTS and other Turkic Cooperation Organizations to promote common culture, foster dialogue and boost people-to-people

contacts within the region” through a participatory and inclusive approach.<sup>92</sup> All of these elements are crucial to building and sustaining resilient societies through connectedness and engagement.

In the section addressing cooperation with external parties, “Turkic World Vision–2040” reiterates the OTS’ pledge to enhance cooperation with international and regional organizations as well as third countries through joint projects and sectoral partnerships. Contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Member States and across the globe, as it was first enshrined in the OTS’ 2018 Cholpon-Ata Declaration, is also emphasized in this part of the document.<sup>93</sup> What is more striking is the inclusion of humanitarian and development cooperation in this pillar with a firm commitment “to channel official development assistance and lines of development credit for the Member States for poverty eradication in developing countries while initiating a regular dialogue with the donor community and providing a regional perspective in donor assistance.”<sup>94</sup> This crafts a perspective for the OTS “to carry out joint projects to link countries that have development needs with Member States that have solutions.”<sup>95</sup> These commitments accentuate the significance that the OTS attributes to humanitarian and development cooperation. The donation

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of a total of 511,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses by OTS members Türkiye and Azerbaijan and observer Hungary to African countries in need in the course of the historical Istanbul Summit constituted an important action step already taken to this end – one that demonstrates cognizance of the close linkage between regional and global resilience.<sup>96</sup>

## Conclusion

“Turkic World 2040–Vision” represents a dynamic, adaptive and transformative approach to ongoing collaboration within the OTS, which is

truly in line with the realities the organization faces on the ground. The rhetoric used in the document and the ongoing endeavors conducted within the OTS indicate the organization's efforts to make regional cooperation less vulnerable and more robust to face the inevitable crises and shocks the future will hold. Therefore, throughout its four-pillar structure, the Vision aims to better prepare its Member and Observer States to the emerging challenges and provide the necessary climate to deliver a prosperous and sustainable form of well-functioning regional cooperation to the benefit of the rules-based global order. Among others, good governance prevails as a keyword in this sense, at national, regional and global levels that are closely interlinked. The most profound elaboration of resilience can be observed in international organizations whose scope of activities includes the development of expertise, methodologies and instruments for regional and global governance.<sup>97</sup> Through the “Turkic World 2040–Vision”, the OTS addresses all three, with a concrete projection for the upcoming two decades in a geo-political and geo-economic environment that is more complicated than ever.

Of course, no vision document is perfect or a “silver bullet”. Therefore, the implementation of “Turkic World 2040–Vision” by means of five-year strategic road maps to be adopted at regular intervals is essential to render it a vivid and valid document. As such, the adoption of this document is an important achievement in itself to render Turkic cooperation a more resilient process for regional and global governance. The methods and means for the implementation of commitments stipulated within the Vision are as important as the document itself. Therefore, the materialization of the commitments indicated in the Vision is essential even with a reasonable delay. Thus, the necessary efforts should be exhorted to properly manage the establishment and implementation of mechanisms such as the Turkic Investment Fund, the Turkic Civil Protection Mechanism and the Drought Prevention Center and to secure their successful functioning and test the resiliency of these commitments. Hence,

**“Turkic World 2040–Vision” represents a dynamic, adaptive and transformative approach to ongoing collaboration within the OTS, which is truly in line with the realities the organization faces on the ground.**

a balance needs to be struck between theory and practice.

Meanwhile, any redundancy in the projects of the OTS and the other Turkic Cooperation Organizations should be avoided to produce the most efficient and resilient outcomes possible. The aim of building resilient societies and institutions must always be kept top of mind in the OTS, whatever cooperation area is at the stake. To this end, principles such as accountability, preparedness, readiness to adapt and responsibility should continue to be the anchors of Turkic cooperation. These solid principles have long resonated throughout the Turkic world. They appear in *Kutadgu Bilig* (*Blessed Knowledge*), written centuries ago in the Karakhanids age by Yusuf Has Hacib, a Turkic philosopher and writer from Balasagun.<sup>98</sup> As a timeless work of Turkic literature dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, this book and the values it ensconces will keep on inspiring the visionary and resilient aspects of Turkic cooperation.

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