



## Turkey and Turkic-Speaking States Türkiye ve Türk Dili Konuşan Devletler

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**Başvuru Tarihi:** 27.04.2021

**Kabul Tarihi:** 22.01.2022

**Makale Türü:** Araştırma Makalesi

### Abstract

The article examines Turkey's approach to the Turkic world and Turkic-speaking integration between six independent Turkic-speaking states globally: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The article describes the creation of the Turkic integration's structures, such as the Turkic Council and its affiliated organizations, its activities aiming to strengthen peace and stability, advancing far-reaching collaboration, and unveiling the potential for stable improvement among the Turkic-speaking states. The article introduces the approaches of the post-Soviet, newly independent in 1991 Turkic-speaking countries, to Turkey's ideology concerning the Turkic-speaking integration between mentioned states. The article describes the inherently meaningful role of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the First President of Kazakhstan, to set up a Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) and other Turkic structures enhancing cooperation Turkic-speaking states. The article also demonstrates Nursultan Nazarbayev's personality as an influential and experienced political leader, an active initiator in the Turkic world, and his colossal authority in the Turkic community and the globe. In the first part, the emergence of the newly independent Turkic-speaking states is described. The second part is connected with Turkey's ideology to the Turkic-speaking states. In the third part, the Turkic Council and its affiliated organization's establishment and its activities are evaluated. In the fourth part, the unduly crucial role of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the First President of Kazakhstan, established a Turkic Council and its Affiliated Organizations, enhancing the Turkic world and Turkic integration other Turkic structures is evaluated and underlined.

**Keywords:** Turkey and the Turkic world, Turkic-speaking states, Turkic integration, Turkic Council, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

### Özet

Makale, Türkiye'nin Türk dünyasına ve yaklaşımını ve dünyada Türk dili konuşan altı bağımsız devletler olan Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Türkiye, Türkmenistan ve Özbekistan arasındaki entegrasyonu incelemektedir. Makale, Türk Konseyi ve ona bağlı kuruluşlarının oluşturulmasını, barış ve istikrarı güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan faaliyetlerini, geniş kapsamlı işbirliğini ilerletmeyi ve Türk dili konuşan devletler arasında istikrarlı gelişme potansiyelini ortaya çıkarmayı anlatıyor. Makale, 1991 yılında yeni bağımsızlığına kavuşan Sovyet sonrası dönemlerin, Türk dili konuşan devletler arasındaki entegrasyona ilişkin Türkiye ideolojisine yaklaşımlarını tanıtıyor. Makale, Kazakistan'ın kurucu Devlet Başkanı Nursultan Nazarbayev'in bir Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler İşbirliği Konseyi (Türk Konseyi) ve Türk dili konuşan devletlerin işbirliğini artıran diğer Türk yapılarını kurmadaki anlamlı rolünü anlatıyor. Makale ayrıca Nursultan Nazarbayev'in nüfuzlu ve deneyimli bir siyasi lider, Türk dünyasında aktif bir başlatıcı ve Türk topluluğu ve dünyadaki devasa otoritesi olarak kişiliğini göstermektedir. İlk bölümde, yeni bağımsız Türk dili konuşan devletlerin ortaya çıkışı

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anlatılmaktadır. İkinci kısım, Türkiye'nin ideolojisi ile Türk dili konuşan devletlerle bağlantılıdır. Üçüncü bölümde Türk Konseyi ve ona bağlı kuruluşunun oluşumu ve faaliyetleri değerlendirilmiştir. Dördüncü bölümde, Kazakistan'ın kurucu Devlet Başkanı Nursultan Nazarbayev'in Türk Konseyi ve ona bağlı kuruluşlarını oluşturan, Türk dünyasını ve Türk entegrasyonunu diğer Türk yapılarını güçlendiren aşırı derecede önemli rolü değerlendirilmiş ve altı çizilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye ve Türk dünyası, Türk dili konuşan devletler, Türk entegrasyonu, Türk Konseyi, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

## Introduction

Turkic-speaking countries and nations with a common rich history, language, culture, traditions adequately represent the Turkic ethnos in the world community of nations and peoples. Altai location is of great importance for the history of the Kazakhs and other peoples of Eurasia. From time immemorial, these majestic mountains decorated the lands of Kazakhstan and were also the cradle of the Turkic peoples. The Turkic world was born in the 1st-millennium middle, and a new milestone was reached in the Great Steppe here (Nazarbayev, 2018). Turks since ancient times lived in neighboring China in the east, India in the south, the Iran-Islamic World in the southwest, and European Civilization in the west. The relationship between the previous civilizations and the Great Steppe Civilization was sometimes in war and sometimes in peace (Erol, 2019). For many centuries, the Turks settled on the territory of Eurasia, created states.

The Turkic-speaking states play an essential role in the international relations system and influence the change in world politics. As the largest Turkic-speaking state in terms of population, Turkey is an active participant in world politics on a regional and global scale and has significant potential in the development of the Turkic world and Turkic integration.

After the Soviet Union's collapse, many academic studies have been done about the Turkic world and the integration among the following Turkic-speaking countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These countries emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. They were faced with a challenging dilemma from the geopolitical point of view: how states should be developed to balance the big and regional player's influence on the world political processes and international relations.

Understanding the ideology of Turkey concerning the Turkic-speaking countries and the Turkic world as a whole is possible and very practical if we consider and analyze Turkey's approach in parallel with the development of multilateral cooperation between Turkey and the rest of the Turkic-speaking countries after they gained independence in 1991. Multilateral cooperation, in this case, implies the interaction of Turkey and the Turkic-speaking countries within the framework of all-Turkic structures and organizations: Summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states since 1992 till 2010, Summits of Turkic Council since 2010, International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY) since 1993, Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TÜRKPAA) since 2008, Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) since 2009, International Turkic Academy since 2010.

Turkey recognized the newly independent afore-mentioned Turkic-speaking countries as the first in the world. In the most challenging years of independence, Turkey provided them with severe foreign policy support. Regular summit meetings have facilitated it. Close political ties have contributed to the deepening of economic and cultural cooperation. The newly independent Turkic states have consolidated their place of priority of Turkish foreign policy. Conversely, the emergence of the Turkic states as independent actors in Eurasia has deepened Turkey's strategic importance in an age of fundamental global transformations.

Since 1992, the Turkic-speaking states have been actively developing Turkic-speaking cooperation in a multilateral format. Over the past 30 years, various international organizations and structures have been created in the world: the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA, 1992), the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY, 1992), the Yunus Emre Foundation (2007), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TÜRKPAA, 2008), the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic

Council, 2009), the Turkic World Educational and Scientific Cooperation Organization (TWESCO, the International Turkic Academy, 2009), the Turkic Council International Secretariat (2010), and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation (2012). The organizations mentioned above were established by understanding a common Turkic identity; their activities reflect the durability of this vision in Turkish foreign policy and the emergence of this vision in other Turkic states. If in the beginning, Turkey had initiated the establishment of international organizations between Turkic states, with time, other Turkic states, such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, became active promoters of institutionalized cooperation. The prominent role of Kazakhstan in the establishment of the Turkic Council, TÜRKPA, and the International Turkic Academy is prominent (Somuncuoğlu, 2016: 98). Nursultan Nazarbayev has the most prominent role in the formation of the organizations mentioned above, so much so that he proposed the establishment of these organizations or hosted the establishment in his own country itself (Zorlu, 2020:83)

Created in 2009, the Turkic Council is a core structure of the Turkic-speaking integration. The Turkic Council has successfully promoted partnership and multilateral cooperation between the Turkic-speaking countries in various spheres: economy, education, science, transportation, tourism, and customs (Ulutaş, 2016:1).

The article's main scope (research question) is to examine Turkey's ideology to the Turkic world and Turkic-speaking state's integration, the crucial role of the Turkic Council and its affiliated structure's activities in enchanting collaboration among the Turkic-speaking states, and the colossal role of the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in strengthening cooperation between the Turkic-speaking states, foundation and creating the Turkic council and its affiliated organizations.

The article hypothesizes that without Turkey's approach to the Turkic world, the Turkic-speaking state's integration, and Nursultan Nazarbayev's efforts, the Turkic-speaking integration process's development could not have developed as well. As a methodology, the functional instrumental approach, which is a methodological basis for solving the determining research question using all the tools, will be used in the article. Due to the questions' specifics and complexity during the indirect work, systematic and corporative methods are used. The discourse analysis also is used.

This article analyzes the integration issues of the post-Soviet "Turkic republics" and Turkey within the framework of the Turkic integration, summits of the Head of Turkic-speaking states, Turkic Council, and the emergence of the Turkic factor in contemporary international relations. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ankara has made considerable efforts to rally the Turkic states, taking a central role in the integration process. Gradually, various interaction formats develop the summits of the heads of the Turkic states, the Parliamentary Assembly, and the summits of the Turkic Council. The step-by-step plans of the Turkic Council for the integration of the Turkic states may lead to the creation of a more influential Turkic factor in international relations.

The article's research is based on a wide range of American, European, Turkish, Kazakh, and Russian academic studies and sources. Simultaneously, the official announcements, statements, and sources concerning the Turkic world, Turkic council, and Turkic-speaking integration. Turkey's first sources and data and other Turkic-speaking states' organizations and agencies will be examined and researched. The books, articles and other sources of Turkic-speaking states history, foreign policy since gaining independence in 1991 until the current days also will be used. American, European, and Turkish politicians and academicians wrote the literature on Turkey's ideology to the Turkic world and Turkic-speaking integration: Bernard Lewis (Lewis, 1968), Marlene Laurelle and Sebastien Peyrouse (Laurelle & Peyrouse, 2013), Feroz Ahmad (Ahmad, 1993), Erik Jan Zürcher (Zürcher, 2014), the Former Prime Minister of Turkey Tansu Çiller (Çiller, 1996), the Former President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel (Demirel, 2003), Turkish academicians Gülay Kılıç, (Kılıç, 2009), Ziya Öniş (Öniş, 2004), Ufuk Ulutaş (Ulutaş, 2016), Seçkin Köstem (Köstem, 2016), Tümen Somuncuoğlu (Somuncuoğlu, 2016), Mehmet Seyfettin Erol (Erol, 2018, 2019), Murat Ekici (Ekici, 2020), Kürşad Zorlu (Zorlu, 2020, 2021), Russian academicians Sergei Koritskiy (Koritskiy, 2006), Irina Svistunova (Svistunova, 2009), Rafael Muhametdinov (Mukhametdinov, 2009), Stanislav Tarasov (Tarasov, 2012), Yelena Studneva (Studneva, 2015), Azerbaijani academician Sevinc Alieva (Alieva, 2008). The Kazakh politicians and academicians also wrote many works of literature on the Turkic world and Turkic-speaking integration:

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (Tokayev, 2001), First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev (Nazarbayev, 2017, 2018), Kazakh politicians and academicians M.Kassymbekov (Kassymbekov, 2011), (Ismagambetov, 2014), (Manaspayev, 2015), (Baimanov, 2015), Maldibek & Dairabayeva, 2017).

### **The emergence of the newly independent Turkic-speaking states**

Before the Soviet Union's dissolution, a difficult economic situation was observed in all Soviet republics. Industrial production declined, coal production decreased due to miners' strikes, foreign exchange reserves decreased, foreign lending to the Soviet economy increased, the Soviet ruble depreciated, store shelves were empty, essential food products in many regions of the Union were sold on coupons. The negative balance of payments in 1990 amounted to more than 17 billion USD (Nazarbayev, 2017: 24).

The entire economy of the Soviet Union was built in such a way that all the republics were interdependent in matters of supply of raw materials, production, and sale of goods, their transportation by rail and road, air and sea. Therefore, the Union's collapse threatened a complete rupture of economic ties between the republics, a collapse of the economy, a shortage of food and essential goods.

The deterioration of the economy of the Union republics could lead to difficulties in ensuring national and military security and vulnerability to external threats. Since May 1991, four Turkic-speaking countries, apart from Kazakhstan, have declared their independence. The world closely followed how the former republics of the Union gained state independence. The spirit of the impending disintegration of a large country was in the air. Among all the Turkic-speaking countries of the former USSR, Kazakhstan was the last to proclaim its independence on December 16, 1991. Turkey first recognized the sovereignty of Kazakhstan, like that of other Turkic-speaking countries in the globe. It has happened almost immediately; a few hours after the signing of the law on independence by President, and Kazakhstan's people highly appreciated this manifestation of Turkic solidarity" (Nazarbayev, 2017: 34).

First of all, the newly independent Turkic states were concerned with preserving the not-so-long-ago proclaimed independence, national and military security, socio-economic development, transferring the planned economy to a market economy. Foreign policy steps were especially difficult for the young states because they had to build their independent foreign policy. The difficulty was that these countries became sovereign not in a calm and stable environment in the world but in the context of changing geopolitics.

The collapse of the USSR directly influenced the change in the world order and had many consequences at the global and regional levels. It has not spared the Turkic-speaking countries either. Thus, in Azerbaijan, the tension associated with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict increased. The Turkic-speaking republics of Central Asia were negatively affected by the internecine wars in Afghanistan and Tajikistan in 1992, which posed a threat to destabilize the Caspian and Central Asian regions.

From the first days of independence, the Turkic-speaking states have established mutually beneficial and friendly relations with all countries of the world. First of all, with the largest neighboring states - Russia and China (they are connected with these countries by membership and cooperation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization and Shanghai Cooperation Organization), the USA, the countries of Europe, South and Southeast Asia, as well as for fraternal Turkey with its first recognition in their independence in the world.

Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, only a narrow group of Turkish people were interested in the so-called "Turks abroad." Not so numerous Turkologists and Turkish were interested in the culture and history of Turkic peoples. Turks were politically and emotionally attached to the Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union, so they had more romanticized than practical information about Turkic regions. Because of the Cold War circumstances, it was impossible to get precise information about the changes going on in the Turkic-populated areas of the USSR. Cold War politics had a significant influence on Turkish perceptions about the conditions of Turkic people within the Soviet Union (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:94-95).

### **Turkey's ideology to the Turkic-speaking states**

Turkey is one of the critical countries of the Turkic World. The term "Turkic world" is based on the concept of "Turanism" and "Turkism" to designate the geographical area where the Turkic-speaking peoples lived. As early as 1839, Hungarian scholars used the word "Turan", an ancient Iranian name for the country to the north-east of Persia, to describe the Turkish lands of Central and Southeast Asia, and applied the term "Turanian" to a group of peoples and languages comprising Turkish and Mongol as well as Finnish, Hungarian, and others (Lewis, 1968:347). "There is a Turkish World today. Because there are traces of this Turkish World, just mentioned the traces of two hundred. 200 million people on an area of 11 million square kilometers are members of the Turkic World. The language they speak is Turkish, with a difference in dialect, if they listen a little well, understand each other, and they do not have trouble understanding" (Demirel, 2003:11).

At the end of the 19th century, Turkism, like the ideology of Islamism, replaced the concept of "Ottomanism" in the Ottoman Empire, although Turkism, and later Pan-Turkism, originated in the Russian Empire. The main ideologist of Turkism was Ismail Gasprinsky, a representative of Crimea. Towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the movement towards Turkism received a political impetus from another source, the Russian Turks-Muslim Tatars and Turks from the Volga, Central Asia, Azerbaijan, and Crimea, numbers of whom were coming to live in the Ottoman Empire. Tatar intellectuals in Russia, led by the Crimean Gaspirah Ismail or Ismail Gasprinski (1841-1914), began a new kind of pan-Turkish movement, at first mainly cultural, then more and more political. Pan-Turkist ideas were also disseminated among the Turks in Turkey by emigres from the Russian Empire, such as Akçuraoğlu Yusuf (1876-1939), Ağaoğlu Ahmed (1869- 1939), and Hüseyinzade Ali (1864-1941) (Lewis, 1968:348, 349).

#### **Scientific origin and ideology of the term "pan-Turkism."**

Pan-Turkism is a political trend, a cultural-liberal movement of the Tatar intellectual community in the 1880s in the Russian Empire. This ideology is based on the idea of uniting the Turkic peoples and the creation of the Great Turan. One of the founders of the doctrine is the mentioned Ismail Gasprinsky afore. He understood Pan-Turkism as an ethnocultural community and cultural movement to achieve a greater degree of unity among the Turkic peoples throughout the world. He considered Muslim religious, cultural, and moral principles an essential component of the Turkic community. For this, he developed a single Turkic language (based on a simplified Turkish language with elements of the Tatar language) and called on the Turkic intelligentsia to make every effort to preserve the cultural identity of the Turkic peoples.

Gasprinsky's ideas aroused great interest among the intelligentsia in the Ottoman Empire. The ideology of the Turkic brotherhood, the Europeanization of the Turkic world was close to such representatives of the Ottoman intelligentsia as the publisher of the first Turkish secular newspaper "Tasfir-i Efkâr" Ibrahim Şinasi, poet Ziya Gökalp, the compiler of the Turkish (Ottoman) language Ahmed Vefik Paşa. He was one of the first in scientific Turkic studies to put forward the idea of lexical commonality and root unity of the Turkish language and the Turkic peoples of Central Asia.

The scientific ideology of Pan-Turkism transformed over time into a practical plane and grew into political movements and associations in the Russian and Ottoman empires. The Kazan Tatar Yusuf Akçura took on a connecting bridge between the Pan-Turkist movements of the two empires. His article "Three Systems of Government", which was published anonymously in the Cairo newspaper "Turk" in 1904, became a kind of one of the manifestos of Pan-Turkism. He compared the concepts of Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, and Turkism and singled out Turkism as the most promising and authentic way of uniting the Turks. Turkism, in his opinion, implies the integration of Turks, Turkic peoples, and other non-Turkic nations that identify themselves with the Turks from the Ottoman Empire to Asia and Eastern Europe. Akçura was a supporter of the creation of a political union of all Turkic peoples with a center in Turkey, published the newspaper "Türk Yurdu" and "Türk Ocağı". The main aim was to advance the national education and raise the scientific, social, and economic level of the Turks, who are the foremost of the peoples of Islam, and strive for the betterment of the Turkish race and language" (Lewis, 1968:350).

The Turkish poet Zia Gökalp was one of the most influential figures in the history of the development of the Pan-Turkist movement. In his book "Basic principles of Turkism", published in 1923, he laid the foundations of ideology and put forward creating an ethnocultural Turkic state - Great Turan. In his understanding, Great

Turan means Motherland. For the pan Turkist Ziya Gökalp in 1911, the term "Fatherland" was neither Turkey nor Turkistan but the vast land of Turan (Lewis, 1968: 358). He argued that the Turks have an ancient and rich culture. According to Gökalp, the Turkish nation had its own strong culture, which had become submerged within a medieval civilization partly Islamic / Arabian and partly Byzantine (Zürcher, 2014: 131).

He was a supporter of the purification of the Turkish language from Arabic impurities and bringing it closer to Turanian roots, and creating Turkish national culture. Ziya Gökalp and his circle advocated replacing Arabic and Persian grammatical elements in the language with Turkish ones and the discarding of 'superfluous' synonyms. However, unlike the purists, they accepted Arabic and Persian words that had become part of everyday language (Zürcher, 2014: 189).

He also argued for the unification of the nations of the Oguz branch of the Turkic ethnos. This theory, formulated by Gökalp, largely explains the position of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first president of the Republic of Turkey, regarding Turkishness when the Turkish Republic was created. "Turkishness involved pride in the history and traditions of Anatolia ('the cradle of civilization'), both of which had to be rediscovered or even manufactured" (Ahmad, 1993:78).

### **Turkey's recognition of the Turkic-speaking state's independence and establishment of cooperation with them**

The Turkic peoples are connected by shared history and traditions. The independence of the newly Turkic states that emerged in the post-Soviet space led to many geopolitical actors interested in expanding their influence in the post-Soviet area. Turkey was one of the meaningful and critical Turkic-speaking states in the world. Turkey's interests have focused on other Turkic-speaking states: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. All Turkic-speaking states has a shared history, culture, customs, art, and language with some differences in slight differences in pronunciation and spelling, excluding the alphabet.

It should be noted that the works and efforts of representatives of the Turkic-speaking nations, who immigrated to the Ottoman Empire from the Russian Empire and to Turkey from the Soviet Union, occupy a meaningful place in the formation of the modern Turkish language and literature. Social sciences such as linguistics and history were developed with Turkic intellectuals' valuable involvement who had emigrated from the Russian Empire and then Soviet Russia. According to the widespread understanding of Turkish linguists and historians, all Turks inside and outside of Turkey were part of a Turkish nation (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:96).

It is difficult to establish healthy relations between Turkey and the Turkic Republics without considering the Soviet past. Under the influence of the identity policies of the Soviet period, the nation-building process in the Turkic Republics was built on ethnic differences, and consequently, during the Soviet period, it became the norm for Turkic peoples within the Soviet Union to see each other more or less as "the other." Turkey's most outstanding contribution to the nation-building processes in the Turkic Republics can be made by trying to promote non-exclusionary understandings of each other (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:98).

Since the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922 due to 1985-1986th when the SU started to be open to the external world, the Turkic-speaking Soviet republics had not opportunities in gathering information about Turkey, the largest and only one independent Turkic-speaking state in the globe. The perestroika and glasnost reforms initiated in the Soviet Union by the First Secretary of the Soviet Union Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev, contributed to an awakening of interest toward the Turkic Republics increase in media coverage of these regions. The real breakthrough happened between 1988-1989 when the Turkic Republics began to be covered in the Turkish media much more than before (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:95).

In the Soviet Union era, Turkey did not have the opportunity to develop even cultural relations with the Turkic Soviet republics. All citizens of the USSR were brought up in the spirit of Soviet ideology; they were actively instilled in the image of a "Soviet man" and "Soviet community" and "Soviet nation." The policy of Soviet communism assumed the "erasure" of the differences between religions and nations and harshly suppressed attempts at manifestations of nationalism and national identity. Therefore, the USSR and Turkey cooperated more in the trade and economic sphere. Turkey and the Soviet Union relations, especially in the economic field, had developed quickly during the 'perestroika' era initiated by President Gorbachev. Between 1987 and

1990, thirty separate agreements were concluded, and trade grew from 350 million USD to 1.9 billion USD a year. In 1990 the Soviet Union's import trade between 80 and 86 percent, and between 85 and 98 percent of the export trade of the Central Asian republics was with the rest of (Zürcher, 2014:328, 329).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the understanding, as mentioned earlier of Turkish identity, found its way into the official discourse and became more prominent. The notion of "Turks abroad" was replaced by "Turkic World" and "Turkic Republics" definitions, thus reflecting the sense of a shared identity background supporting Turkish relations with these regions (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:96). The collapse of the USSR also opened up fundamentally new opportunities for Turkey to rapidly expand its political, economic, and cultural presence in Central Asia. The closeness of Turkey to these countries is based on historical, cultural, and linguistic links, which provide a solid foundation for such cooperation, which can unite and help them integrate into the international community (Çiller, 1996).

Turkey's involvement in the region was mainly supportive. The main principles of Turkey's policy towards other Turkic countries were consolidation of sovereignty and independence of brotherly countries, Adopting a democratic and secular society model based on market economy, ensuring their integration with the rest of the world, improving their relations with Turkey in all areas. In line with these principles, Turkey sought a smooth transition in the region because domestic and regional stability was required for these countries to remain independent sovereign states. Turkey was also influential in the internationalization of newly independent Turkic states to become a part of the various regional and international organizations.

Turkey tried to increase its engagement with this region on a broad range of issues, including political, economic, cultural spheres. In the more extended period, its position and prestige in Central Asia depend on its effectiveness as a source of financial help (or a channel of Western help) and regional political power. In both cases, it has been less than successful" (Zürcher, 2014:330). However, Turkey's economic support remained limited, not because it did not want to, but simply because it did not have the means. Its private sector lacked the required capital accumulation and competitive know-how, and technology and the public sector had limited resources. The possible pipeline projects represented the highest priority for the Turkish government and had a vital national interest. Pipelines should, in the future, be able to transport oil from the fields in the Caspian Sea and gas from the vast Tengiz field in Kazakhstan to Western consumers (Zürcher, 2014:330). Even the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was constructed thanks to foreign capital. Thus, Turkey was not able to satisfy the high expectations of the new states.

### **The beginning of Turkey's cooperation with the Turkic-speaking countries and their involvement in the Turkic-speaking integration through the creation of the unique structures**

The independence of the Turkic-speaking states has ineluctably enhanced Turkey's geopolitical statement in the international arena. The Turkish vector of the newly independent Turkic-speaking states was one of the priorities of their foreign policy. It is primarily due to the activity of Turkey, which, as noted above, was the first recognized country at the globe the independence of these states and sent high-ranking diplomatic delegations to establish contacts with Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. The first reactions in Turkey, both on a political level and in public opinion, were euphoric. President Turgut Özal talked about the coming of a 'Turkic century' and about the 'Turkic [or Turkish, for the Turkish language, does not differentiate between the two] world, stretching from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China' (Zürcher, 2014:328). Ankara also sent military, academic, and administrative personnel to offer bureaucratic and technical support to the Turkic states in issue areas such as security, national education, and economic transition (Köstem, 2016:87).

As the only independent Turkic state and the only relative of the newborn states, it would be appropriate to devote some space to Turkey's position and attitude to the newly emerged Turkic countries before and after their independence. Turkey was also caught quite unprepared by the developments in the region. According to the foreign policy agenda developed by Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former Presidents Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel, Turkey helped these countries establish their state structures to consolidate their

independence. After 1991, relations with the Turkic Republics became one of the priorities of the early 1990s Turkish governments. The eighth president of Turkey, Turgut Özal, and the ninth president, Süleyman Demirel, spent enormous efforts developing relations with the Turkic Republics (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:94,95). Turkey also initiated meetings (summits) of the leaders of the Turkic-speaking states at the presidential level to discuss issues of mutual interest. The summits of the Head of Turkic-speaking states have great importance in the meeting of the union activities in the Turkic world on an official political roof (Zorlu, 2020:81). Turkish Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel first proposed the proposal to hold summits in May 1992. The first meeting took place in Ankara in October of the same year.

Turkey's leadership was aware of the importance of strengthening relations with the other Turkic states. As mentioned before, Süleyman Demirel was fully aware of the importance of establishing strong ties with these countries. He said, "It is vital for us that these countries maintain their independence. This is not just an issue of Eurasia, trade or economy; this is a political issue far beyond others". His government took political risks to extend state loans to support the fledgling economies of other Turkic countries. He also thought that the cultural aspect of relations was a privilege that cannot be assumed but should be earned instead. In this regard, Turkey launched the "Grand Student Project," through which thousands of students received scholarships to study in Turkish universities.

Turgut Özal, then President of Turkey, was also a champion of strong relations within the Turkic world. He believed that the "21st century would be that of Turkey and the Turks". He visited Azerbaijan and the Central Asian Turkic Republics in April 1993, shortly before his unexpected death, making it impossible to pursue his agendas. It was the first presidential visit from Turkey to these countries after their independence. Özal was known for following policies based on economy, and he oversaw the transition of the Turkish economy from protectionism to liberalism. Turgut Özal underlined the significance of creating a trade pattern that allows free movement of persons, goods. Services by adjustment legislation of customs in the Turkic states to a common, to establish a regional investment and development bank, expanding capabilities of railway, road, and air transportation and telecommunications, conveying natural resources of the Turkic states to Europe via Turkey, reinforcing regional cooperation and coordination targeted at integration into the world economy (Öniş, 2004).

One of the most vital shortcomings of the integration aim in the Turkic world is that the government agencies and institutions do not have sufficient opportunities and numerically (Zorlu, 2020:81). The new Turkey's statement needed the reconstruction of Turkish governmental bodies to implement the politics concerning the newly independent Turkic states. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade, and many other Ministries and institutions opened branches responsible for the Caucasus and Central Asia. As part of this new foreign policy vision and activism, Turkey established the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) in 1992 (Köstem, 2016:88).

The creation of the World Assembly of Turkic Peoples, the organization engaged in "recreating, developing and propagating the Turkic way of social development," initiated the processes of Turkic integration in 1991. In 1992, the summit of the heads of Turkic-speaking countries was held in Ankara for the first time, which ended with several agreements so far only in humanitarian and cultural cooperation. The following year, following Turgut Özal to Central Asia and Azerbaijan, the Presidents of the Turkic-speaking countries signed the Protocol on the Establishment of Commonwealth of Turkic-speaking Countries. On July 12, 1993, under the agreement signed in Almaty, the Organization for the Joint Development of Turkic Culture and Art TURKSOY was established.

As afore-mentioned, in 1992, the Turkish government initiated the Great Student Project, providing scholarships for thousands of students from different parts of the Turkic World. Over 7000 students from Central Asia and Azerbaijan have received scholarships to study in Turkey – despite the desperate overcrowding at Turkish universities (Zürcher, 2014:329). Upon the signing of agreements with Turkic Republics, ten thousand students came to Turkey in 1992. The project has become one of the most successful Turkish governmental initiatives related to the Turkic World to date (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:97). The establishment of International Ahmet Yassawi Kazakh-Turkish University in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University in the Kyrgyz Republic further contributed to strengthening the education



cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic Republics. The Turkish government allocated 60 million dollars for Ahmet Yassawi University development (Tokayev, 2001:178). These universities encouraged overall student mobility within the Turkic World. Student mobility between Turkey and the Turkic Republics has been further developed by the Mevlana Exchange Program and independent student mobility. In the 2016-2017 academic year, among over 100,000 international students attending Turkish universities, students from Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan maintained their majority positions, comprising approximately 15,000 and 10,500 of the student body, respectively (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:97, 98).

Turkey tried to play a consolidating role in the Turkic world. However, the Turkic-speaking countries were ready to develop equal relations with Turkey, not to the detriment of other priorities in their foreign policy. In one of his conversations with Turgut Özal, Nursultan Nazarbayev said that Kazakhstan has forever said goodbye to the stereotype of "older brother." This statement was correctly received in Ankara (Tokayev, 2001:175). This position of Kazakhstan and some other Turkic-speaking countries on this issue led to a shift in emphasis from political to trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian cooperation between Turkey and Turkic-speaking countries.

According to some Turkish experts, despite Turkey's stormy and active efforts to integrate with the Turkic-speaking countries, this policy still had shortcomings and failures. They admitted that some serious mistakes were made with excited but unprepared attempts. The private sector has sometimes misunderstood Turkey's efforts to rapprochement with the Turkic-speaking states in the economic sphere. Many Turkish businesspeople pursued easy money and quick profits in Turkic-speaking countries and did not quite honest business. It led to a decrease in confidence in Turkish business, significantly weakened Turkey's reputation in these countries. The Turkish private sector, which has started to focus on the region since the '90s, has not been entirely booming here. Besides well-intentioned entrepreneurs, some people who could be called opportunistic have overshadowed the success of Turkish entrepreneurs for a long time. Also, Turkey has been found in a variety of assistance to the regional countries through Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) scholarships, Eximbank. However, these aids are scattered, not stable, and target-oriented (Kılıç, 2009).

### **The Turkic-speaking integration's formation stages (1992-2009)**

To better understand the ideology of Turkey to the Turkic world and Turkic integration, it is necessary to give the chronology of the Summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states and their main results. Inter-Turkic cooperation, which began in 1992, can be divided into several stages of development in parallel with the holding of summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states and the creation of the Turkic Council. The first stage covers the period from 1992 to 2001. The second stage includes the period from 2006 to 2010, the third stage - from 2010 to the present. The period from 2001 to 2006 is stagnant in the Turkic-speaking integration, characterized by a decline in activity in the Turkic-speaking integration and the absence of high-level meetings.

#### **The First stage (1992-2001)**

As noted above, in October 1992, the **first** Summit of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states was held in Ankara with signing the Ankara Declaration. The text of the declaration noted the strengthening of the sense of belonging to the Turkic community, emphasized the need to deepen trade and economic relations, and implement joint projects in various fields. In his speech, the President of Turkey, Turgut Özal, called on the Turkic-speaking states to make every effort to strengthen and develop relations between fraternal countries that have common historical and cultural roots (Kassymbekov, 2011:129). He also mentioned the need to approximate customs legislation, the creation of a free trade arrangement, the establishment of joint investment and development banks, railways, and development of telecommunication facilities by road and air connections between the Turkic-speaking countries (Official website of the Turkic Council [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021a). The starting point for the beginning of Turkey's multifaceted cooperation with the Turkic-speaking countries was undoubtedly the significance of the shared history, language and culture. The enormous reserves of natural resources in the Turkic-speaking countries and the prospects for their joint development and exploitation significantly increased Turkey's interest in cooperation with these countries.

Since the emergence of new independent Turkic-speaking states in the world's political map, the search for their further development began. Multilateral relations between Turkic-speaking states open up opportunities to develop economic cooperation and integration in the world space. Cultural and economic cooperation has been provided by forming political and diplomatic relations and the establishment of interaction between the heads of the state. The understanding of cooperation led Turkic-speaking states to get together and hold a summit of the heads of states.

The **second** summit had been held in Turkey again in October 1994, in Istanbul. Previously it was planned to be held in Baku in 1993. However, due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it was decided to hold it in 1994 in Istanbul. The summit's final document noted the principles of independence, sovereignty, respect for territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, emphasized the mutual support of countries within the framework of cooperation in the UN, OSCE, and other international organizations. A distinctive feature of the Istanbul Summit was the agreement on subsequent meetings of Senior Officials and Foreign Ministers to discuss the preparation of future summits of the heads of Turkic-speaking states.

The **third** summit of the leaders of the Turkic-speaking countries was held in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, in August 1995. The summit discussed information issues, development of cultural, scientific, and economic ties, ensuring regional stability and security. A feature of the Bishkek summit was the speeches of the Presidents of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, who proposed not to speed up a rapprochement between the Turkic-speaking countries, especially in the political sphere. Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov stressed the need to strengthen trade and economic ties, primarily in the Central Asian region within the Central Asian Economic Community framework, created in 1994.

The **fourth** summit was held in October 1996 in the capital of Uzbekistan, Tashkent. The summit noted the dynamic and progressive development of cooperation between the Turkic-speaking states in various fields, developing trade and economic contacts, and removing obstacles in mutual trade. An essential result of the summit was the decision to establish the Permanent Secretariat of the Summits of the Heads of the Turkic-speaking states on the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev (Official website of the Turkic Council - [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org). 2021b). The parties also agreed to develop the cultural and historical heritage of the Turkic-speaking peoples, support the initiative to implement the Central Asia-Afghanistan-Pakistan transport route of the north-south transport corridor with the TRACECA project.

The **fifth** summit took place in June 1998 in the new capital of Kazakhstan, Astana. Turkmenistan was represented at the level of the speaker of parliament. Deepening trade and economic cooperation and cooperation in energy resources and transport have been discussed. The possibility of joint implementation of projects for the extraction and exploitation of natural resources, the development of infrastructure for their transportation in Turkey and Europe, the development of the transport corridor "Europe-Caucasus-Asia" was noted. These issues were of great importance for Turkey as an energy importer and a transit country. These questions also met the interests of other Turkic-speaking countries interested in diversifying oil and gas exports.

The **sixth** Summit was held in Baku on April 8, 2000. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were represented at the level of speakers of parliaments. It meant decreasing the interest of these countries in this multilateral format. The decline in Turkmenistan's interest is the policy of permanent neutrality proclaimed by this country and the acquisition of permanent neutrality status by Ashgabat following the resolution of the UN General Assembly adopted on December 12, 1995. As for the position of Uzbekistan, it was associated with tense relations with Turkey at that time.

The **seventh** summit was held in April 2001 in Istanbul. All countries, excluding Uzbekistan, were represented at the presidential level. Speaker of Uzbekistan's Parliament took part. Experts regarded this position of Uzbekistan as the beginning of distance from the process of Turkic integration and participation in this multilateral format. Simultaneously, the participation of Turkmenistan at the presidential level was highly appreciated by the parties. Actual results of the meeting were the proposal of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, to establish a Council of Elders of Turkic-speaking countries and the Parliamentary

Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries, change the wording of "Turkish-speaking countries" to the term "Turkic-speaking countries," as well as the venue of the following, eighth summit, in 2002 in the capital of Turkmenistan Ashgabat. The Kazakh leader proposed to ask Süleyman Demirel to head the Council of Elders, as a well-known politician who stood at the origins of creating the community of Turkic-speaking states (Nurymbetova & Kidaibergenov, 2010:297).

After the seventh summit, starting in 2001, five-year stagnation began in the cooperation of the Turkic-speaking states, which lasted until 2006. Some experts argued that a decline of activity linked with the weakening of Turkey's activity associated with the economic crisis of 2001, the reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy priorities from the Caucasus region and Central Asia to the Middle East region, problematic issues in Turkey's domestic policy, and intensification of cooperation in the Commonwealth Independent States (CIS). An example of active interaction within the CIS is the creation of the Eurasian Economic Community in October 2000, the commissioning of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium in March 2001, and the signing of an agreement on the founding and legal status of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in October 2002.

### **The Second stage (2006 -2010)**

After a five-year break, the next **eighth** summit of the heads of the Turkic-speaking countries was held in November 2006 in Antalya with the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. Turkmenistan was represented by the Ambassador to Ankara, while Uzbekistan did not participate. The lack of participation of Uzbekistan significantly weakened the idea of further development of the Turkic unity and created the preconditions for the emergence of obstacles to integrating the Turkic world. When the status in the Turkey-Uzbekistan relations was about to displace the summit once more at that time, it was decided for Turkey to host the summit held in Antalya with Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev's diplomatic traffic (Zorlu, 2020:84,85).

The need for rapprochement and cooperation between the Turkic peoples resumed at the 8th summit, which was held on November 17, 2006, in Antalya. The main event of the meeting was the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's initiative on the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries, which, according to experts, confirmed the interest of the Kazakh leader in the full-scale cooperation of the Turkic countries. At the summit in Antalya, agreements were also reached on strengthening ties in energy and security. In this connection, the final declaration was signed on the need to intensify economic and transport ties between the Turkic countries, which indicated the expansion of the circle of mutual interests of the Turkic states (Koritskiy, 2006).

The President of Kazakhstan also suggested creating the Permanent Secretariat of the Summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking countries. This initiative marked the beginning of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking countries in 2009, as well as the Council of Elders of the Turkic-speaking states. These initiatives were implemented in 2008-2009. The agreement on the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries TURKPA with headquarters in Baku was adopted at the conference of the chairmen of the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey in Istanbul in November 2008.

The next important step in the integration process of the Turkic world is the foundation of the Turkic Council, which was created in October 2009 at the **ninth** summit of the heads of the Turkic states in the ancient Azerbaijani city of Nakhchivan with the participation of the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. Then the heads of the Turkic-speaking countries of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey signed the Nakhchivan Declaration and the Agreement on establishing the Council of Turkic-speaking countries. The declaration "confirmed the intention to develop relations further and strengthen the solidarity of the Turkic-speaking countries based on a common history, language, identity, and culture." The main goal was to strengthen the regional and international cooperation in the Eurasian region (Official website of the International News Agency of Kazakhstan – Kazinform, [www.inform.kz/en](http://www.inform.kz/en), 2009) based on "solidarity of the Turkic-speaking states." The uniqueness of this topic belonging to the Turkic world was determined not by political or territorial ties but rather by specific ethnic criteria: language, culture, and ideas about the clans. That is, "Turkism" began to be treated as a historical and political category that transcends statehood. Simultaneously, it was put forward as the primary organizing principle of the interstate organization (Tarasov,

2012). Also, a memorandum of association was signed with this organization, headquartered in Istanbul. Turkish President Abdullah Gül designated this event as a historic step since, for the first time, there was an institutional structure that united the Turkic world. President Gul expressed confidence that the summit in Nakhichevan will become a turning point in the integration of the Turkic countries, which will end with the creation of the Commonwealth of Turkic Nations (Svistunova, 2009).

Also, in Nakhchivan, an even greater emphasis was placed on the energy side of the “Turkic integration,” primarily in the field of ensuring the multi-variant transportation of energy resources. The declaration adopted in Nakhichevan emphasized the strategic importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline in ensuring global energy security and sustainable economic development of the countries of the region. In this regard, the heads of state noted the importance of increasing the capacity of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and attached particular importance to the connection between the Aktau port and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. In general, of course, it is well known that the richness of energy resources in Central Asia has been the critical link to become a part of “Turkic integration” (Mukhametdinov, 2009).

The **tenth** summit of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states was held in September 2010 in Istanbul with the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Turkey. An essential outcome of the summit was the heads of state of the candidacy of the first Secretary-General of the Turkic Council, the representative of Turkey, Ambassador Halil Akıncı, the decision to create a Council of Entrepreneurs to enhance trade and economic ties. The parties expressed satisfaction with the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries and the Turkic Academy, which opened in the capital of Kazakhstan Astana in May 2010. From 2010 to 2014, the famous Turkish diplomat Halil Akıncı was the Secretary-General of the Turkic Council.

These Summits play an essential role in clarifying political problems, strengthening economic cooperation, developing scientific and cultural relations between the Turkic-speaking countries and peoples, giving impetus to the political and social processes in the region. The unity of the Turkic-speaking republics rests on international principles, serves as the solution to political and cultural problems of the Turkic-speaking countries. The strengthening of cooperation between the Turkic-speaking countries is also connected with the everyday problems of the countries themselves. The summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states play an essential role in resolving political problems, strengthening economic ties, economic integration, and developing scientific and cultural relations. These meetings have a positive impact on the socio-political processes taking place in the region and intellectual and economic integration in general. In the implementation of cooperation, the meetings of the heads of the Turkic-speaking countries play a significant role. Summits also provide an opportunity to cooperate directly and achieve solidarity between independent Turkic-speaking states (Studneva, 2015).

### **The Third stage (since 2010 – till present time) – Turkic Council's Summits**

After creating the Turkic Council in 2009 and since 2011, summits were renamed to the Summits of the Turkic Council. Since 2011, seven face-to-face summits and one informal online summit have been held due to the global pandemic: in 2011 in Almaty, in 2012 in Bishkek, in 2013 in Gabala, in 2014 in Bodrum, in 2015 in Astana, in 2018 in Cholpon-Ata, in 2019 in Baku and online in March 2021. This stage is the most important and influential in integrating the Turkic countries and is characterized by the institutional formation of the Turkic Council as a full-fledged international organization. The most critical event in the Turkic-speaking integration was the accession of Uzbekistan to the Turkic Council as a full member. This circumstance further strengthened the Turkic Council's authority in the world and gave a new impetus to the revitalization of the Turkic Council.

The Almaty Summit, which was the **first** Turkic Summit composed under the structural foundation of the Turkic Council, was facilitated by Nursultan Nazarbayev in October of 2011 and was joined by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan Ilham Aliyev and Roza Otunbayeva, and Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey Bekir Bozdağ. This Summit was correspondingly the principal Summit systematized under an explicit subject of “Economic Cooperation.” The Summit discussed topical issues of cooperation at the international and regional

levels and issues of strengthening trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian ties between the Turkic-speaking countries. Within the Summit of the Turkic Council framework, a business forum was held where the parties signed the Agreement on establishing the Business Council of the Turkic-speaking countries, which was another step towards integrating the Turkic-speaking countries. Representatives of large organizations and companies of Turkic-speaking countries were members of the Business Council (Israilov, 2011).

Amid the Summit the "Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States concerning the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" was supported; "Principles of Procedure of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States"; "Control of the Council of Elders of the Turkic Speaking States working under the sponsorship of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" and "Direction of the Staff of the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" were accepted. The heads of the states marked the Declaration.

A feature of the First Summit of the regional Turkic union - the Turkic Council was that the Summit was held in the year of the 20th anniversary of the independence of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. The Almaty summit is intended to become a new milestone in further developing and strengthening cooperation between the participating countries, based on the shared history, language, and culture. The following vital point can be noted that an essential impulse for expanding and deepening cooperation between the businessmen of the Turkic-speaking countries was the holding of, within the framework of the Summit, the first business forum with the participation of representatives of the business circles of the member states of the Turkic Council. As noted earlier, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry leaders of the states of the Turkic Council, as a result of the Almaty summit, signed an agreement on the establishment of the Business Council of Turkic-speaking countries.

The Turkic Council's second Summit was organized on 22-23 August 2012 in the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Bishkek Summit's main topics were discussed under the issue of "Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation." The Summit accommodated by Kyrgyzstan's Almazbek Atambayev was visited by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Turkey Abdullah Gül Minister of Azerbaijan Artur Rasizade. Amid the Summit Agreement on the Financial Rules of the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States", "Agreement on the Establishment of the Turkic Academy" and "Charter of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation" were agreed. Toward the finish of the Second Summit, the "Declaration of the Second Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" was additionally signed by the mentioned representatives (Orudzhayev, 2012). Together with the TURKSOY created in 1993 and the Turkic Academy in 2010, the creation of the Fund also strengthened the institutional framework for the development of Turkic-speaking integration and cultural and informational dialogue between countries. The official flag of the Turkic Council was approved. A single flag of the Council of Cooperation of Turkic-speaking States was approved and confirmed. The new single flag symbolizes the presence in the Turkic-speaking Council of all four states - the sun from the flag of Kyrgyzstan, the star - Azerbaijan, the crescent - Turkey, the color - Kazakhstan (Vestnik Kavkaza, 2012).

At the meeting in Bishkek, Turkmenistan was represented as an observer. At the Summit, great attention was paid to the countries' economic cooperation, of great importance in which made to the transport communications between the countries. Participants of the Summit signed a protocol to create a railway corridor with the route: Turkey (Kars) - Tbilisi - Baku-Caspian Sea - Kazakhstan - Kyrgyzstan - China. One of the most important moments at the Summit was the theme of transport - this is the main driving force of economic relations. Participants talked about physical barriers, bureaucracy on posts, and other obstacles. Issues of improving the infrastructure, improving the condition of roads and railway transport of the countries of the Turkic Council also discussed (Orudzhayev, 2012).

The **third** Summit held in Gabala, Azerbaijan, took place on 15-16 August of 2013. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev as a host, the third Summit was attended by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev, President of Turkey Abdullah Gül, and Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan Sapardurdy Toyliyev. The primary subject of this Summit was "Transport and Connectivity."

The Summit was remarkable for ratification of the "Convention of Cooperation among the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Turkic Council," and the 20th Anniversary of TURKSOY was commended. Furthermore, "Assertion of the Third Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" was marked by the members (Arashev, 2013).

The summit members noticed that acknowledging the transit capacity of the states taking part in the Turkic Council and the change of the vehicle foundation opens some excellent prospects. Specifically, as per Turkish President Abdullah Gül, the present-day idea of the Silk Road is an energy, transport, and logistics plan that will add to the improvement of the whole geographical area of Turkic nations. As Nursultan Nazarbayev argues, the Great Silk Road map has primarily been located within the Turkic empires since its inception. For him, during the rule of the Turkic peoples in Central Eurasia, the Great Silk Road reached its peak and promoted economic prosperity and cultural growth on an international scale" (Nazarbayev, 2018). These ventures will transform the Turkic world into an epicenter for the sustainable improvement of the world economy. President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev noted the insufficient level and ineffectiveness of trade relations between the member countries. The trade turnover between six independent Turkic-speaking countries is 1 trillion 150 billion USD. This figure does not reflect the potential of Kazakhstan. All states must strengthen their economic ties and increase their trade turnover. Nazarbayev raised several actions plans to deepen further the integration processes of the countries of the Turkic world that aims to set fundamental for the development of their economic power by transport and communications. They plan to increase transit traffic through Kazakhstan by half by 2020 and ten times by 2050 and through the country to 50 million tons per year (Osipov, 2013: 4).

The **fourth** Summit of the Turkic Council took place in June of 2014 in Bodrum, Turkey. The Summit was systematized with the main subject of "Cooperation in Tourism." Facilitated by Turkish President Gül, it included Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kyrgyzstan's Almazbek Atambayev, and Turkmenistan's Gurbangulu Berdimuhamedov. In the Summit agenda, ministers of affiliated states' foreign affairs agreed on the "Turkic Academy's Rules of Procedure Decision." Also, the executives signed the "Declaration of the Fourth Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" alongside the "Decisions on the Appointments of the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary Generals of the Cooperation Council of the Turkic Speaking States and the President of the Turkic Academy" (Panfilova, 2014).

The Summit's importance is that Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov took part in it for the first time, as it meant the expansion of the Turkic Council. Like the previous one, this Summit enabled the participating countries to solve the issues before them, primarily spiritual unity and joint economic projects. Between the countries that are members of the Council, a mutually beneficial form of cooperation and issues of a common market were formed.

Another critical point of this Summit is the attention paid to the image-related significance of the Turkic Council. Firstly, it was impossible to gather the Central Asian states for a constructive conversation, whereas the president of Uzbekistan was absent from this Summit. Secondly, the Council summits are not so formal because this format places greater emphasis on the support of various Diasporas, culture, and tourism, and so on, as the theme of the 4th Summit was tourism (Ismagambetov, 2014).

The Kazakh government organized the following fifth Summit of the Turkic Council in September of 2015 in the capital of Kazakhstan. The guests hosted by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev were President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey İsmet Yılmaz, and Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan Sapardurdy Toilyev. During the Summit entitled "Cooperation in Information and Media," several documents were approved and signed (Baimanov, 2015).

Thus, the "Rules of Procedure of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation" and the "Rules of Procedure of the Nomadic Civilization Centre" were approved. The following documents were signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States: the "Agreement on the Establishment of the Centre of Nomadic Civilization," the "Agreement on the Financial Rules of the Nomadic Civilization Centre," the "Agreement on the Financial Rules of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation," the "Agreement on the Financial Rules of

the Turkic Academy," the "Protocol Regarding the Scale of Compulsory Contributions of the Member States to the Budget of the Centre of Nomadic Civilization," the "Protocol Regarding the Scale of Compulsory Contributions of the Member States to the Budget of the Turkic Academy," the "Protocol Regarding the Scale of Compulsory Contributions of the Member States to the Budget of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation." Among other important signed documents were the "Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation regarding the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation" and the "Decision on the Complementary Documents of the Turkic Academy, Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation and Centre of Nomadic Civilization". The Presidents have signed the Declaration of the Fifth Summit. Also, Decisions on the Appointment of the Deputy Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council of the Turkic Speaking States and the President of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation signed by them (Manaspayev, 2015).

During the Summit, in his speech, the President of Kazakhstan called this Summit a crucial step to further integrating the Turkic-speaking states. The President of Kazakhstan noted the possibility of the Turkic Council being accepted as the observer at the UN and OIC is in the common interest of the organization's member countries. Besides, the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, drew attention to the importance of joint efforts to neutralize terrorist, extremist, and separatist threats. Touching upon the development of cooperation in the trade and economic sphere, the President of Kazakhstan noted that the member states of the Turkic Council have possibilities of being transit bridge between continents that will connect the economic and communication networks of China, Russia, Europe, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – www.akorda.kz, 2021a).

Nursultan Nazarbayev highlighted that the improvement of the transport infrastructure allows the Turkic-speaking countries to develop the tourism industry. Also, the President of Kazakhstan noted that it is necessary to look at the International Kazakh-Turkish University for an acceleration of the joint educational space creation. International Turkish-Kazakh University, named after Ahmet Yassawi in Turkistan, is an educational institution for the Turkic world. Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that the Fund for Culture and Heritage of the Turkic World in Azerbaijan and the Center for Nomadic Civilization, initiated by the Kyrgyz side, are evidence of the desire of the Turkic-speaking countries to develop (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – www.akorda.kz, 2021a).

The **sixth** summit was held in the city of Cholpon-Ata of the Kyrgyz Republic in September 2018 on youth and national sports. In addition to the presidents of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban took part in it as honored guests.

The **seventh** summit on the topic of 'Supporting Entrepreneurship' was held in October 2019 in Azerbaijan's capital Baku. The residents of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan Purli Agamyradov participated to the summit. It should be answered that the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev took part in the summit as a lifetime Honorary President of the Turkic Council. The Turkic Council granted Nursultan Nazarbayev this status by deciding in May 2019 on Turkey's proposal (Zorlu, 2020: 85, 86). The official accession of Uzbekistan to the Turkic Council as a full member, the initiative of the First President Nursultan Nazarbayev to raise the status of the Turkic Council to the level of the Organization and his suggestion on preparing a development program for the Turkic world until 2040 were the primary outcomes of the summit.

An **informal online summit** of the Turkic Council was held in March 2021 under the chairmanship of the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev under the slogan "Turkestan is the spiritual capital of the Turkic world." The First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, participates in the Summit as an Honorary Chairman of the Turkic Council. The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed to create an educational fund "Great Turks" and Kazakhstan's readiness to allocate 50 grants (scholarship named after Yassawi) for training the youth of fraternal countries under the bachelor's program at the Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University located in Turkestan (Official website of the President of Kazakhstan - www.akorda.kz, 2021b). First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, noted the considerable

potential for increasing mutual trade and investment in the economy. For him, the peace agreement reached between Baku and Yerevan will allow reviving the Great Silk Road in this direction, which will increase the role of the Caspian Sea. It will open up new opportunities for our countries to effectively take advantage of China's Belt and Road Initiative. The Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor (or Turanian Corridor) becomes the safest and shortest trade route between Europe and Asia (Official website of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – [www.elbasy.kz](http://www.elbasy.kz), 2021a). The strategic importance of this corridor with the economic benefits are evident in this way, not only other countries of the Turkish world in Turkey all over the world to perform faster and cheaper transport (Zorlu, 2021).

The Third stage of integration of the Turkic-speaking countries stands out among the other two stages in that the meetings of the presidents of the four Turkic-speaking states: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, became the nucleus and created a solid foundation for the development of an international all-Turkic organization - the Turkic Council and further full-fledged integration of the Turkic-speaking countries. It was facilitated by the active activity of the "Turkic four." These countries have taken part in all summits and summits; put forward various initiatives for rapprochement and integration. An analysis of the "Turkic Quartet" activities shows that of this four, Turkey has assumed the functions of a political and ideological character, Kazakhstan - a scientific and technical one, Azerbaijan - a cultural and humanitarian character. The dynamic and active work of the "Turkic Four" hastened the adoption by Uzbekistan of a decision to join the Turkic Council and Hungary to participate in the Turkic Council summits as an observer country. The accession of Uzbekistan to it, taking into account its strategic importance in the context of economic, energy, and transport potential in the Central Asian region, gave an extraordinary dynamism to the development of the Turkic Council.

The geography of the Turkic-speaking states is very extensive, and it has all the necessary potential for expanding cooperation. These countries cooperate in the framework of international organizations, speaking from a unified position. Mutual support in international organizations is, of course, necessary. It is imperative that the ties between all Turkic-speaking states, both in bilateral and multilateral formats, rise to an even higher level. Currently, the geopolitical situation around the world is tense. In this context, the role of the activities of the Turkic council is relevant.

As it is known, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were represented by the parliaments' speakers in some summits. In the last three summits, Uzbekistan did not participate. At the end of each summit, declarations were signed, which reflected: cooperation in the spheres of economy, trade, culture, education, language, measures to combat terrorism and drug trafficking. These summits help strengthen relations and cooperation between the Turkic-speaking republics, which were restored after independence. Simultaneously, mutual relations and cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries in many spheres paves the way to the peace, security, and economic development in Eurasia.

The summits of the Turkic Council laid the foundation for another tradition. It is the holding of jubilee events of outstanding personalities, national epics, and other significant events. Holding ceremonies in honor of the 1000th anniversary of the epos "Manas," the 500th anniversary of Fizuli, the 150th anniversary of Abay Kunanbayev, the 1300th anniversary of the epic "Dede Korkut" serves as an example of this. The main goal of holding such jubilee ceremonies is to prove that the Turkic peoples have a rich spiritual heritage, shared roots, a common history, a desire to strengthen cooperation in many spheres, and unification in the cultural sphere. At the same time, historical ties, the similarity of goals and tasks, the problems of the Turkic-speaking countries are one of the critical factors that unite the Turkic peoples and the Turkic-speaking republics. Since the first summit, bilateral and multilateral cooperation has developed in many areas, especially in the economy. Together with the declarations, several essential agreements were signed (Veitsel, 2014).

After the seventh summit of the Turkic Council, which has been held in October 2019 in Baku, some experts began to speak about the active steps of Turkey in Turkic integration and rising Ankara's attention and interest to cooperate with Turkic-speaking states sincerely. They understand the following point of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's view as a call for facilitation cooperation with Turkic-speaking countries. He said that "Although we are two separate states, we are the sons of one nation, therefore at every step we say: we are two



states, but one nation. Now, holding the Turkic Council, we expand our horizons and say: we are six states, but one nation". The experts evaluate Turkey's turn towards the Turkic world with a slight departure from the Islamic world and strengthen the Turkic ideology in Ankara's foreign policy.

### **The International Turkic Congress**

The International Turkic Congress played a crucial role in the ideology of Turkey concerning the Turkic-speaking countries and the Turkic world. They began to be held annually in 1993 in various cities of Turkey in parallel with the summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states. Congresses were conceived as international congresses of representatives of public organizations of Turkic states and communities around the world. From 1993 to 2001, nine congresses were held and from 2006 to the present – three Congress. The first Congress took place on March 21, 1993, in Turkey. From 2001 to 2006, no congress was held and resumed in 2006. The 11th Congress was held in 2007 in Azerbaijan and the 12th in 2009 in Kyrgyzstan.

The most striking in its content and level of participants was the 10th Congress, which rightfully reflects the Turkic factor as one of the main directions of Turkey's foreign policy in the 2000s. It took place on September 18-20, 2006, in Antalya, after a five-year break. Six hundred delegates from Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, subjects of the Russian Federation: Tatarstan, Chuvashia, Tuva, Sakha-Yakutia, Altai, and Karachay-Cherkessia attended the Congress. There were also representatives of the Turkic communities from Eastern and Western Europe, the USA, Ukraine, Moldova, Iran, Syria.

A distinctive feature of this Congress from the previous ones was that in addition to the leaders of the Turkic public organizations from the Turkic-speaking countries, representatives of the state authorities of the participating states took part in its work. The purpose of this was to try to create a mechanism for the practical implementation of solutions. It is primarily because the decisions of the previous congresses practically remained on paper due to the absence of an executive body to control their implementation. Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev, Secretary of State of Kazakhstan Oralbai Abdikarimov, and others made speeches at the opening of Congress.

The Prime Minister of Turkey R.T. Erdoğan called on the Congress participants to make Turkic cooperation a vital element of foreign policy, to unite the efforts of the Turkic states, communities and diasporas to strengthen their positions in international organizations in order to effectively resist attempts to isolate the Turkic-speaking countries from each other, and to resolve Cyprus and the Karabakh problem, the situation in Northern Iraq, Afghanistan. "I come up with an initiative to create Commonwealth of Turkic-speaking states, which will prepare the conditions for their economic integration and allow them to act in the international arena from a unified position. History provides us with a unique chance to unite the efforts of our countries with common cultures and historical roots. "According to him, "... there are communities of French-speaking, English-speaking, and Spanish-speaking countries. Why don't we also create our community? We need to rewrite our shared history and teach it in our schools. "He also called on the Turkic states, primarily Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and communities to act as a "united front" in the energy sector. Such transnational projects for the transportation of energy resources as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum have already created, in his opinion, a reasonable basis for joint actions of the Turkic states and communities (Official website of the Turkish Newspaper Hürriyet – [www.hurriyet.com.tr](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr)).

### **Establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council), its affiliated organizations, and its activities**

For deepening understanding of Turkey's ideology to the Turkic world and Turkic integration will be helpful to examine the setting up of the Turkic Council and its affiliated organizations, and its activities, and Turkey's role in its establishment and development.

At the moment, the Turkic Council is the international organization of the Turkic states and aim to strengthen the unity of the Turkic peoples. The members of the organization are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. It is a full-fledged international association created in the course of agreements ratified by the heads of the member states. The institution, also known as the Turkic Council today, is of crucial

importance in terms of Turkey and the Turkic world (Zorlu, 2020:85). With its current position, the Turkic Council reveals a severe area of cooperation with a population of approximately 170 million, a surface area of 5 million square kilometers, and a national income approaching 1.5 trillion dollars (Zorlu, 2021).

Turkic Council as an international association is focused on the aim and standards of the UN Charter and other generally perceived standards and norms of international law, including sovereign fairness, regional integration, and sacredness of universally recognized territories of countries, and additionally the preservation of worldwide peace, security and advancement of good-neighborly and cordial relations and the participation among its members (Abdyldaev, 2015:9).

Turkic Council is an association devoted to reinforcing peace and stability, advancing far-reaching collaboration, and unveiling the potential for stable improvement among its parties. Even though it unites a specific gathering of nations, the association does not adopt a selective strategy. Despite what might be expected, by advancing further relations and solidarity among Turkic talking nations, it intends to function as an innovative regional instrument for propelling worldwide participation in Eurasian landmass, especially in Central Asia and Caucasus regions. The Turkic Council not only applies its policies in the transport, customs, tourism, and other directions towards the Member States, but it also willingly collaborates with its neighbor states to guarantee peace and stability in its region.

The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, first expressed creating the Turkic Council in 2006 at the Turkic-speaking countries' head of state. Turkey supported it and all other Nursultan Nazarbayev's initiatives concerning the Turkic-speaking integration. In particular, Turkey provided the office of the Turkic Council in Istanbul in 2010 and widely supported the Turkic Council's activities since its establishment.

### **Structure of the Turkic Council, Its Objectives and Tasks**

Following the central norms and principles of the Nakhchivan Agreement, strengthening confidence among the member states, keeping peace in the region and beyond, providing joint positions on foreign policy issues, coordinating actions to combat international terrorism, separatism, extremism, and trans-border crimes, promoting practical regional and bilateral cooperation of common interest, establishing favorable conditions for trade and investment, aiming for comprehensive and balanced economic growth, social and cultural development, discussing questions of ensuring the rule of law, good governance, and protection of human rights, expanding interaction in the fields of science, technology, education, and culture, encouraging interaction of the mass media and broader communication and promoting an exchange of legal information and enhancing legal cooperation have been set (Nakhchivan Agreement on October 3, 2009).

Having said the principles mentioned above of the Turkic Council, the following bodies of the organization were established to execute the organization's objectives (5, Article 3): Secretariat; Council of Heads of State; Council of Foreign Ministers; Senior Officials Committee and Council of Elders.

After the signing ceremony of the treaty on the establishment of the Turkic Council, Turkish President Abdullah Gul stated that this event is historical since, for the first time, there was an institutional structure that united the Turkic world. It was especially noted that the Turkic Council would promote the deepening of cooperation between the participating countries in the sphere of economy and tourism. The President of the Republic of Tatarstan expressed confidence that the summit in Nakhchivan would be a turning point in integrating the Turkic countries, which would culminate in the creation of the Commonwealth of Turkic Nations (Avatkov, 2015).

### **Activities of the Turkic Council**

As per embraced operational standards, Turkic Council expects to exchange existing collaboration in different regions between the members into multilateral participation. In such a manner, existing or potential participation obstructions are recognized at first; the essential phases on removing these obstructions and advancement of collaboration in a new range of issues are processed later. In this construction, working assemblies involving members' specialists in all participation ranges of the organization are framed. Choices

taken by these individuals are reflected as a separate document and are taken after deliberately. The entire process happens without any other assistance, and any form of duplication is evaded (Tokman, 2016).

### **Political and Economic Cooperation**

The primary tool for political collaboration between member states is the meeting of Heads of State annually. Foreign Ministers of Member States come together during the summit at the meetings of Council of Foreign Ministers regularly. In addition to the working sessions, Foreign Ministers are organizing additional meetings to discuss the common concern. The Council of Foreign Ministers holds additional meetings to discuss the topics of mutual concern. In this regard, informal meetings of Foreign Ministers as customary are held annually on the sidelines of General Assemblies of the UN since 2011. Thus, since 2011 during the General Assemblies meeting of the UN, Foreign Ministers of member states have been holding a meeting outside of the working format (Tokman, 2016). The CFM convened 16 times, including the informal gatherings customarily held on other occasions, such as in the UN General Assembly margins in New York (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021a).

Additionally, security consultations among the Turkic Council Member States convene annually since 2013. Three rounds of security consultations have been held so far. This mechanism serves as a tool to further cooperation among the Member States on regional and international security issues. In addition to the relations with Afghanistan, matters such as prevention of violent extremism and countering the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters have prevailed on the agenda during the last round hosted by Turkey on 9 February 2016 in Ankara (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021b).

The "Joint Training Program" for the Young diplomats has been developed and implemented by the Turkic Council Secretariat, under the Cooperation Protocol signed during the 3rd Summit of the Turkic Council between our member states' Foreign Ministries, held in Gabala. The first program was implemented in Turkey in 2014, the second in 2015 in Azerbaijan, the third in Kazakhstan in 2016, the fourth in Kyrgyzstan in 2017. The fifth program was held in Turkey in 2018, and the sixth last year was organized in Azerbaijan. According to the Turkic Council data, one hundred thirty-eight (138) junior diplomats have benefitted from the training program; sixty-five (65) of them were women, therefore contributing to UN's SDG 5 (gender equality), UN's SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), and UN's SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals. Besides, the junior diplomats from Hungary, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan also participated in this training program (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021c).

One of the latest involvements of the Secretariat of the Turkic Council is the launch of cooperation among the foreign policy research centers of the Member States. Centers for Strategic Studies of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan, National Institute for Strategic Studies of Kyrgyzstan, and Center for Strategic Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, which are included in this cooperation process, have convened three meetings so far. The first meeting was hosted by the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM Azerbaijan) in Baku on 8 May 2015 (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021d).

Various occasions and activities have been prepared regarding economic collaboration since the foundation of the Turkic Council, including yearly gatherings of Economic Ministers of the Member States. Toward this path, three working groups on "improving the investment climate," "diversification of the economies," and "promoting entrepreneurship" consistently direct their doings. Until now, Turkic Council convened eight meetings of the Ministers in charge of Economic and ten meetings of the Working Group with the experts of the relevant institutions of the Member States (Official website of the Turkic Council [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021e).

The Turkic Business Council likewise makes its commitments to encouraging economic participation under the patronage of the Turkic Council. It unites the business elite from the members and goes for promoting partnerships between them. Under the umbrella of the Turkic Council, six meetings of the Business Council and four Business Forums gathering around more than 500 businessmen were held so far (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021f).

### **Customs and Transport Cooperation**

Turkic Council assigns tremendous significance to collaboration in the fields of customs and transportation. Until now, Turkic Council convened seven meetings of the Heads of Customs Administrations and ten meetings of the Working Group with the experts of the relevant institutions of the Member States. The last Seventh Meeting of the Heads of Customs Administrations was held on 11 March 2019 in Astana (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021g).

According to the Turkic Council data, four meetings of the Ministers of Transport, two meetings of the Coordination Council on Transport at deputy minister-level, eight Working Group meetings have been organized. The last was hosted by the Minister of Transport and Roads of the Kyrgyz Republic Zhanat Beishenov on 17 April 2019 Bishkek. Member States signed an MoU on the Sister Ports Process among the Seaports of Baku, Samsun, and Aktau in 2013, intending to enhance cooperation in the field of transport even further. Kuryk Seaport of Kazakhstan joined the Sister Ports Process at the Fourth Meeting of Ministers of Transport of the Turkic Council convened on 17 April 2019 in Bishkek. Turkmenbashi Seaport of Turkmenistan was also invited to the Sister Ports Process (Official website of the Turkic Council [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021h).

### **Tourism Cooperation**

After the Fourth Summit with the theme of “Tourism Cooperation,” the efforts to increase cooperation in this field gained momentum. Enhancing collaboration among the Member States and contributing to transforming the historical Silk Road into an attractive tourism destination is at the center of these efforts. Turkic Council convened four meetings of the Ministers in charge of Tourism and thirteen meetings of the Working Group consist of the experts of the Member States. The “Joint Cooperation Protocol on Tourism Cooperation among the Member States” and the “Cooperation Protocol among the Private Sector Umbrella Institutions of the Member States” in the tourism sector were signed respectively at the First and Second Ministerial meetings. The third ministerial meeting was held on 7 June 2016 at Cholpon Ata, Kyrgyzstan. The Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) attended the event too. At the meeting, the tour operators of the Member States involved in the Turkic Council Modern Silk Road Joint Tour Package project signed “the Code of Ethics of the UNWTO” (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021i).

### **Education Cooperation**

Till now, five meetings of Ministers of Education were held so far, while Senior Officials of the Ministries of Education assembled seven times, with the last meeting taking place on 14-15 March 2019 in Bishkek. Ministers signed the Decisions on Award Directive of the Turkic Council Turkic University Union" and "Regulation of the Turkic Council Sister Schools Partnership Program" as well as approved the "Regulation Orkhon Exchange Program" and amended Article 10 of the "Directive on the Establishment of the Turkic University Union and Higher Education Area" (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021j).

Turkic University Union was established in 2013, consists of 22 universities, and promotes collaboration between the universities. The fourth General Assembly of the Union has held in Turkistan in 2019 and hosted by the Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University. Gazi University, Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, Cappadocia University from Turkey, and Szeged University from Hungary were accepted as new members. The Orkhon Exchange Program, Sports Games of the Union, and Student Council are Union's structures. Since 2014, the Secretariat has organized meetings at Rectors and Vice-rectors and Five General Assemblies to get ahead in the said programs. Forty-three students of member universities from the International Relations and Political Science departments benefited from the Orkhon Exchange program (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021k).

### **Information and Media Cooperation**

The Secretariat of the Turkic Council gives special attention to the press and other means of mass communication. The Member states acknowledge the rising role of media and information in the nowadays

world and stressing the importance of developing cooperation between them. The Turkic Council's fifth Summit held in Astana in 2015 was dedicated to cooperation in Media and Information. During the meeting, the ministers and high officials signed on the "Turkic Council Joint Cooperation Protocol on Information and Media" (Baimanov, 2015). One meeting of Ministers in Charge of Information and Media and six Working Group meetings in the expert level was held till now (Official website of the Turkic Council – www.turkkon.org, 2021l).

### **Youth and Sports Cooperation**

Based on the founding agreements of the Turkic Council and the instructions of the Heads of State given at the Summit meetings, a cooperation project in the field of Youth and Sports was initiated. The First Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Youth and Sports of the Turkic Council was convened in March 2016 in Istanbul. Secretariat organized four meetings of the Ministers in charge of Youth and Sports and three Working Group meetings. The fourth meeting was held on 29 November 2019 in Bishkek. Parties agreed to organize the Fifth International Youth Camp in Azerbaijan in summer 2020 with youth participation from the Member States and other brotherly countries. Parties agreed to organize the First Youth Exchange Program among the Member and Observer States in Turkey in 2020. They also decided to organize a Training Program on Voluntarism in 2020 in Turkey and establish a pool of volunteers of the Turkic Council, which will benefit international sports events held in the Member States (Official website of the Turkic Council – www.turkkon.org, 2021m).

World Nomad Games is another domain in the field of Youth and Sports. The Games are intended to restore unique national sports heritage and revitalize the anciently sacred mindfulness and historical reminiscence of the Turkic nations and the nomadic population of the world. The First World Nomad Games were held in Yssyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, in September 2014 and brought together more than 400 athletes from 19 countries. Furthermore, the Second Games were staged in 2016 attended by 62 countries and over 1400 athletes. The third World Nomad Games held in Kyrgyzstan in 2018. Approximately 2000 athletes from 82 countries competed in 37 sports branches (Official website of the Turkic Council – www.turkkon.org, 2021n).

The indispensable part of Diasporas in advancing the portrait of their homelands and impacting popular opinion in nations where they dwell is one of the primary issues of the Turkic Council. In such a manner, Turkic Council held three meetings of the Ministers and Heads of the Institutions in charge of Diaspora Affairs and four Contact Group meetings comprising the experts till now. In the last meeting of Ministers and Heads of Institutions in Charge of Diaspora Affairs hosted in Turkey in 2018, parties decided to organize the Second Turkic Council Diaspora Forum in 2020 in Turkey with the active participation of the diaspora representatives of the Member States from across the world. They also agreed to prepare a joint online diaspora portal under the Turkic Council's umbrella to enhance the cooperation and coordination between the Turkic Speaking Diasporas. They also decided to start working on the Turkic Council Diaspora Atlas preparation, which will provide comprehensive information on the Diasporas of Turkic Speaking States (Official website of the Turkic Council – www.turkkon.org, 2021o).

### **Affiliated Organizations of the Turkic Council**

The Turkic Council is composed as an umbrella association for the participation systems among the Turkic Speaking States. The associated Organizations of the Turkic Council in this setting are as per the following:

The International Organization of Turkic Culture, TÜRKSOY, is the UNESCO of the Turkic World and was established in 1993 upon signature of its founding agreement by the Ministers of Culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Turkey (Official website of the International Organization of Turkic Culture - TÜRKSOY – <https://www.turksoy.org>).

TÜRKSOY (the International Organization of Turkic Culture) was set up in 1993 with the operations center in Ankara. The creation of this organization in 1993 by an agreement between the Ministers of Culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, set a precedent for the institutionalization of Turkic cooperation activities on the international level. TÜRKSOY is the primary institution that supports cultural cooperation between Turkic countries and communities and introduces Turkic

culture to the world (Somuncuoğlu, 2016:97). The Turkic-speaking countries were fruitful on the reclamation of the collaborative culture, customs, history, national and spiritual esteems, launched varied scenarios for advanced collaboration. In this respect, one of the crucial steps in creating the TÜRKSOY organization for studying and coordinating the national and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples. The activity of TÜRKSOY is controlled at the level of ministers of culture in summits. TÜRKSOY is an international organization providing cooperation in the spheres of culture and art of all peoples speaking the Turkic language and does not interfere in member countries' internal and foreign policies. TÜRKSOY builds its work on the principles of respect for the sovereignty and independence of the member countries and third countries, complete non-interference in their political orientation. The activity of the International Organization TÜRKSOY receives constant support from the Heads of State of the Turkic-speaking countries (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013:77).

The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, stated at a formal meeting on September 11, 2015, concerning the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate, that in the 21st century the Turkic peoples should cooperate. The population of independent Turkic states - Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan - and significantly more than 200 million delegates of Turkic people groups living everywhere throughout the world - they all originated from one extraordinary predecessor - a Turkic warrior delivered Nursultan Nazarbayev (Baigarin, 2015).

The spiritual heritage of the Turkic world, its centuries-old and multifaceted subculture, is an integral part of the whole world civilization. Furthermore, it is pretty apparent that this uniqueness, preserved despite all historical vicissitudes, will determine the spiritual essence and place of the Turkic-speaking peoples in the unified stream of world cultural development. In turn, within the framework of cultural and humanitarian interaction between Turkic-speaking peoples, TÜRKSOY plays a unique role as an active organization in preserving and propagating the cultural heritage of the Turkic world (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013:78).

At the very beginning, TÜRKSOY was known as the Organization for the Joint Development of Turkic Culture and Art, and then by the joint decision, it was changed to the International Organization of Turkic Culture. However, at the same time, if somebody breaks the word TÜRKSOY into two parts, somebody will get "Turk" and "soy," meaning "roots" and "ancestors" (Alieva, 2008). The organization's structure consists of the following five bodies: The Council of Heads of State, the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Elders, the Council of Honored Foreign Ministers, and the permanent secretariat. This organization is led and represented in the international arena by its Secretary-General elected for three years (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013:78).

In 2009, TÜRKSOY joined the Turkic Council. The leaders of the Turkic countries highly appreciated the activities of TÜRKSOY. Decisions adopted by the Permanent Council are driven by the General Secretariat of the International Organization (Sharipov, 2015). Since the formation of TÜRKSOY, great jobs have been done:

Firstly, in 1996 official cooperation between TÜRKSOY and UNESCO was started, including joint consultations and mutual representation. Secondly, it strengthened the friendship between the Turkic peoples. Thanks to the activities of TÜRKSOY, the Nauryz Celebration, which is celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox and is a cultural property of the Turkic peoples and became a World Heritage Site of UNESCO, is widely known in many countries of the world (Germany, Austria, and Great Britain). Besides, the organization holds various festivals, competitions, exhibitions, and meetings in theater, music, opera, ballet, and fine arts with the participation of artists groups. Thirdly, TÜRKSOY magazine is published in three languages, and books, albums, monographs published by the international organization are also available in many languages of the Turkic peoples. Thus, the organization develops the culture and art of the Turkic world (Aralbayeva, 2015).

Today, TÜRKSOY has a significant influence on the cultural processes that were stemming in the Turkic world. President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev suggested preparing the textbook about the history of Turkic peoples up to the 15th century, prepared by the Turkic Academy, noteworthy, suggesting the possibility of introducing this work into the school curricula of Turkic-speaking countries in 2015. Attention was also drawn to the significant contribution made by the Turkic peoples to the culture of humankind. In this regard,

it was proposed to publish information on the rich cultural heritage in the form of scientific work – "The heritage of ancestors" (Mager, 2015). As a Turkey, Kazakhstan has been increasingly trying on the role of a leader of the Turkic unity, which is putting forward most of the integration initiatives (Shafigullina, 2012:9).

The issue of the general cultural rapprochement of the Turks was discussed and resolved within the framework of TÜRKSOY. At the TÜRKSOY level, reviving the language of the "Turki" as a common lingua franca is being addressed. President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev called on his country to prepare for the transition to the Latin alphabet. The transition of Kazakhstan to the Latin alphabet can occur in 2025. He underlined that this would serve not only the development of the Kazakh language but also turn it into modern communication (Malik, 2017).

The Cyrillic alphabet was adopted in Kazakhstan in connection with the policy of Russification in 1940. In connection with the revival of the Kazakh language and the development of close economic relations with the European Union countries, and cultural relations with Turkey, it was decided to transfer the graphics to the Latin alphabet (Malik, 2017).

**TÜRKPA** on November 21, 2008, a multilateral agreement was authorized in Istanbul between the parliamentary bodies of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan on the foundation of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking nations. With headquarters in the capital of Azerbaijan, it is functioning to extend parliamentary collaboration among Turkic nations. Within the framework of the TÜRKPA, four commissions are dealing with spheres of culture, education, economic cooperation, legislation, and international relations. Simultaneously, the TÜRKPA has established cooperation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and several other international structures (Azertac, 2013).

**Turkic Business Council** was founded ten years ago, in 2011. The Cooperative Business Council has an essential role in the actions of the Turkic Council. Its point is to improve financial support between Turkic nations by joining the four states' business associations and units.

**International Turkic Academy** was introduced as a national association of Kazakhstan in 2010. The Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbayev continued to put forward new initiatives to strengthen integration, having proposed the organization of the Academy of the Turkic World in Kazakhstan, and within the framework of the Academy: The Center for Turkic History and Culture, the Turkic Language Study Center, the Turkic Library and the Turkic Museum. According to the First President of the Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Academy was to contribute to the study of the Turkic history and culture to show the contribution of the Turkic people to the world civilization. Nazarbayev explained his idea as follows: "The existing Turkic world has no one to unite when Turkey begins to deal with it, it has called pan-Turkism, and Kazakhstan does not have pan-Turkism, so I offered the Turkic Academy." The Academy began to coordinate the in-depth study of the Turkic world, culture, and history from ancient times to the present and promote cooperation between the research and educational centers of the Turkic countries. More than 200 scientists from 15 countries work in scientific projects carried out by the Academy (Zorlu, 2020:87). The Turkic Weekly, the weekly journal, first appeared in 2015. Its publication was aimed at regularly informing the news of the Turkic world. According to the annotation given in the publication, the Turkic weekly provides reliable information and timely analysis of the key political, socio-economic, and scientific events taking place in the Turkic world. Thus, the Turkic countries' joint efforts managed to build a political and economic platform for cooperation and establish a cultural and information dialogue (Regnum, 2010).

Nursultan Nazarbayev understood the need for research that would consistently and multifacetedly highlight the origins of the problems of the Turkic peoples and came up with the initiative to establish the Turkic Academy, which would analyze and study the language history and culture of the Turkic-speaking peoples. On May 25, 2010, in Astana, Presidents of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and Turkey Abdullah Gül opened the Turkic Academy. The activities of the Turkic Academy are aimed at international cooperation with the leading scientific and educational institutions of Turkey, Russia, Germany, Japan, China, the countries of Central Asia. The priority tasks of the Turkic Academy are: conducting international research on Turkology,

in which Turkic scientists from foreign countries will take part; The creation of the National Corps of Turkic Languages; The opening of the International Committee of Turkic Studies; Creation of the Academy Portal; Creation of a unified international database of Turkic languages and literature, electronic library, archives; systematization and description of Turkic written monuments; conducting expeditions to places of compact residence of tiny Turkic peoples; preparation of analytical collections on the state of language policy in the Turkic states, the language situation in the Turkic world, the state policy of language ideology and politics, types of language policies in the Turkic countries, etc.; making copies of ancient maps of Turkic peoples and historical documents, which are stored in libraries and archives of eastern countries (China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan); the creation of an electronic library and archive on the basis of collected scientific sources about the Turkic peoples of the whole world; publication of textbooks with expanded information on the role and place of the Turkic civilization in the context of integration processes, etc.; the opening of a master's and doctoral studies in the field of "Turkology" under the Turkic Academy with the aim of increasing the scientific potential of Turkic science and the training of qualified scientific academicians in the field of Turkic studies; Opening of the publishing center at the Turkic Academy. In 2011, the Academy began publishing the journal "Statistics and Turkology," which has the status of an international publication that publishes and reviews articles by researchers in Turkic and related sciences (Maldibek & Dairabayeva, 2017).

Literature and art play a paramount role in the spiritual revival of all peoples of the Turkic culture. In 2012, Astana became the cultural capital of the CIS and the Turkic world. The honor of being the first in this initiative of the international organization of Turkic culture, TÜRKSOY fell to the young capital of Kazakhstan, Astana. Throughout 2012, Astana has become a meeting place for cultural figures, the scientific community, artists, and painters of the entire Turkic world. The capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, located in the center of Eurasia, turns from year to year into one of the world's major cultural centers. Holding the year "Astana - the cultural capital of the Turkic world" in Kazakhstan, undoubtedly, made its positive contribution to the spiritual development of the entire Turkic world (Madiyar, 2012).

The Academy has issued more than 90 publications, working on shared literature, geography, history textbooks to promote the shared history, culture, and heritage of the Turkic States and implementing the social research project called Turkic Barometer. Turkic Academy conducts necessary archeological research and excavations, which led to discovering ancient artifacts related to the Turkic era in Mongolia (Official website of the Turkic Council – [www.turkkon.org](http://www.turkkon.org), 2021p).

### **The crucial role of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the First President of Kazakhstan, in forming and establishing a Turkic Council and its Affiliated Organizations, enhancing the Turkic world, and Turkic integration**

As the founder of independent Kazakhstan and the architect of the modern state, Nursultan Nazarbayev played an essential role in the Turkic-speaking integration process and the development of the Turkic world.

After Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, the President of Kazakhstan found himself face to face with the political and economic reality of building a newly independent country on the world map. His vast political and life experience, intuition, and political will became a factor in the successful development of both the state itself and its relations with world countries, including the Turkic-speaking states.

By the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the position of Kazakhstan, like other Turkic-speaking states, was unenviable. They were assigned the role of an agrarian and raw material appendage in the country, the collapse of which was primarily due to a chronic lag in economic and technological terms.

Kazakhstan gradually rebuilt the public administration system, formed the foundations of a market economy, and built itself into the world community. Together with the construction of a new independent state, the First President of Kazakhstan developed bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries of the Turkic world and has always been an active supporter of Turkic-speaking integration.

Nursultan Nazarbayev's activities as a politician are not limited only to Kazakhstan. He is the initiator of many international initiatives. He is worried about the fate not only of his country but of all humankind. It is the



greatness of Nursultan Nazarbayev. Without exaggeration, that he is loved and respected worldwide, his opinion is taken into account. Furthermore, the Turkic peoples respectfully call him Elder. The wisdom of the outstanding political figure of our time, the most experienced leader of the Turkic world, the national leader of the Kazakh people, his highest authority, and valuable experience in government leadership are of great importance in solving major international problems.

During the 7th Summit of the Turkic Council was organized by the Azerbaijan government in October of 2019 in Baku, the Council of Turkic States awarded Nursultan Nazarbayev the lifetime status of Honorary Chairman of the Cooperation Council of the Turkic-speaking States and the Highest Order of the Turkic world. Nursultan Nazarbayev became the first owner of this distinction, which will henceforth be awarded to the most honored figures for outstanding services to the Turkic world and extraordinary efforts to strengthen solidarity and friendship between peoples.

An active initiator of Turkic-speaking integration was the First President of Kazakhstan, the current honorary chairman of the Turkic Council, Nursultan Nazarbayev. In the IX-the Summit of Turkic-speaking Head of States in 2006 in Antalya, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev initiated the permanent Secretariat of the Turkic-speaking Head of State's Summits, the Parliamentary Assembly and Council of Elders of the Turkic-speaking states. After two years, in 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking states, in 2009 - Cooperation Council of the Turkic-speaking states was founded by signing the Nakhichevan Agreement in Azerbaijan in 2010 – the Council of Elders and Turkic Academy was started its activities. Nursultan Nazarbayev has the feature of being the only president who participated in all 10 Summits of the Head of Turkic-speaking states (Zorlu, 2020:81).

President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, argues that President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is an outstanding personality and the Elder of the Turkic world. The President of Kazakhstan has a very high authority in the Turkic world.

The 11th President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, mentions that President Nursultan Nazarbayev is a prominent statesman who made a crucial contribution to the development of cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan. The whole Turkic world recognizes Nursultan Nazarbayev as its leader and highly appreciates his initiatives to unite fraternal Turkic peoples, study common history, and develop cultural ties (Official website of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – www.elbasy.kz, 2021b).

He is a global leader. Therefore, it is no coincidence that he is rightfully recognized in the Turkic world as the Elder of the Turkic world, enjoys great authority and popularity in Turkic-speaking countries. He is, first of all, an exemplary leader of the Turkic world, the founder of statehood, and an excellent leader who determined the path of development of independent Kazakhstan (Ekici, 2020:120). The First President of Kazakhstan pays special attention to the cultural heritage of the Turks, emphasizing its significance and influence on the development of the entire world civilization (Ekici, 2020:123).

Some of the concrete steps of Nazarbayev towards the integration of the Turkic world can be listed as follows: 1. The initiative about setting up the "Turkic Council" in 2009 and the implementation of mechanisms such as the "Turkic Business Council" and "Turkic Academy" under its umbrella; 2. Holding the Central Asian Heads of State Meeting in Astana in 2018, after a long break; 3 and changing the name of the most populous city of Kazakhstan to "Turkistan" in 2018 (Erol, 2018).

Nazarbayev, the Turkish world in the early 1990s, the presidents of Turkey, Turgut Ozal era, has been the most stable and followers of the integration process initiated by Süleyman Demirel. In a sense, Nazarbayev took over the banner of the process initiated by Turkey. Besides, the Kazakh leader was influential in establishing institutions such as the Turkic Council and the Turkic Academy (Erol, 2019).

## Conclusion

Turkic-speaking countries and peoples with a common rich history, language, culture, traditions adequately represent the Turkic ethnos in the world community of nations and peoples. For many centuries, the Turks

settled on the territory of Eurasia, created states. The Turks' significant state associations in Western Asia were the Seljuk state, the Sultanate in Konya, and then the Ottoman Empire, which later became the Turkish Republic. The Turks of Central Asia created independent khanates, after the collapse of which their population became part of the Russian Empire and then into the Soviet Union.

After establishing the Turkish Republic and the Soviet Union, the Turkic peoples could not interact with each other due to differences in ideology and national politics. In Turkey, as in the only independent Turkic state at that time, there was an understanding and realization that related Turkic peoples live in the world, and their fate is not indifferent. Therefore, during the existence of the Soviet Union, Turkey did not have the opportunity to develop even cultural relations with the Turkic Soviet republics, and Turkic-speaking Soviet republics had not opportunities in gathering information about Turkey. All citizens of the USSR were brought up in the spirit of Soviet ideology; they were actively instilled in the image of a "Soviet man" and "Soviet community" and "Soviet nation." The policy of Soviet communism assumed the "erasure" of the differences between religions and nations and harshly suppressed attempts at manifestations of nationalism and national identity.

Understanding the ideology of Turkey concerning the Turkic-speaking countries and the Turkic world as a whole is possible and very practical if we consider and analyze Turkey's approach in parallel with the development of multilateral cooperation between Turkey and the rest of the Turkic-speaking countries after they gained independence in 1991. Multilateral cooperation, in this case, implies the interaction of Turkey and the Turkic-speaking countries within the framework of all-Turkic structures and organizations: Summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states since 1992 till 2010, Summits of Turkic Council since 2010, International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY) since 1993, Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TÜRKPÄ) since 2008, Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) since 2009, International Turkic Academy since 2010.

The collapse of the USSR destroyed the barrier and opened all opportunities for collaboration between Turkey and the newly independent five Turkic Speaking States: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The Soviet Union's dissolution also opened up fundamentally new opportunities for Turkey to rapidly establish bilateral and multilateral relations and economic and cultural presence in Central Asia. As it is known, Turkey was the first country in the world that recognized its independence. First of all, there was an interest in establishing and developing cultural ties and economic cooperation. On July 12, 1993, an agreement was signed in Kazakhstan (Almaty) on the establishment of TÜRKSÖY. Nowadays, it unites 16 participants and six independent states; this organization includes Turkic-speaking subjects of the Russian Federation and some autonomous regions of other countries. Since 1992, the summits of the heads of the Turkic-speaking countries have been held. In November 2008, an agreement was signed to establish the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries (TÜRKPÄ). Its tasks are to form a mechanism for interparliamentary relations between the Turkic-speaking countries, the rapprochement of political views, the exchange of information, the propaganda of the Turkic culture, the expansion of economic ties, the implementation of joint projects, the finding of ways to solve the problem of the Turkic world.

Since 1992, the Turkic-speaking states have been actively developing Turkic-speaking cooperation in a multilateral format. Over the past 30 years, various international organizations and structures have been created in the world: the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA, 1992), the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY, 1992), the Yunus Emre Foundation (2007), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TÜRKPÄ, 2008), the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council, 2009), the Turkic World Educational and Scientific Cooperation Organization (TWESCO, the International Turkic Academy, 2009), the Turkic Council International Secretariat (2010), and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation (2012). The organizations mentioned above were established by understanding a common Turkic identity; their activities reflect the durability of this vision in Turkish foreign policy and the emergence of this vision in other Turkic states. If in the beginning, Turkey had initiated the establishment of international organizations between Turkic states, with time, other Turkic states, such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, became active promoters of institutionalized cooperation.

A noticeable intensification of cooperation has been observed since the establishment of the Turkic Council in 2009. The agreement on its formation of the Cooperation Council of the Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) was signed on October 3, 2009, in Nakhchivan (Azerbaijan). The Turkic Council is a wide-ranged organization since it includes TÜRKSOY, TÜRKPA, and several other organizations. It also has its composition the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Committee of Senior Officials, the Council of Elders (Aksakals) of the Turkic-speaking States. At the same time, the most significant proposals are discussed (and, if agreed, appropriate decisions are made) at the summits of the Turkic Council. The Secretariat of the Turkic Council is located in Istanbul, the Turkic Council Academy in Nur-Sultan, TÜRKSOY in Ankara, and the TÜRKPA in Baku.

After the Nakhchivan agreement, cooperation between Turkic-speaking states has acquired more specific organizational forms. The role of the summits has increased, and their numbering begins with the Turkic Council summit. However, the Turkic Council cannot be reduced to a purely interactive platform for exchanging views and discussing cultural, political, and economic partnerships. In the current geopolitical configuration, the Turkic Council plays an essential additional role in clarifying and possibly coordinating positions. The Turkic Council still operates on the principle of "Strength - in Unity."

Therefore, the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, played the most enormous and prominent role in forming the organizations mentioned above, including the Turkic Council, TÜRKPA, and the International Turkic Academy.

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