

AN INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH  
CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

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ÖZDEN EREN

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---

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Akçalı  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Akçalı  
Advisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Assist. Prof. Dr. Işık Kuşçu (METU, IR) \_\_\_\_\_

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Akçalı (METU, PSPA) \_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. Canan Aslan-Akman (METU, PSPA) \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

Name, Last name : Özden Eren

Signature :

## **ABSTRACT**

### **AN INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES**

Özden Eren

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The objective of this thesis is to examine the development of relations between Turkey and the five Central Asian Republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in an institutional framework. In this context, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries and the International Organization of Turkic Culture are analyzed in terms of both their structural features and their activities and projects in Central Asia.

The thesis is based on the institutional theory in order to reflect the impact of institutions in Turkey's relations with Central Asian Republics. Moreover, this thesis focuses on the institutionalization steps which took place in 2000's in line with the new dynamics in Turkish foreign policy during the period. As such, it argues that institutionalization process, which has been realized both by the establishment of new institutions dealing with the region and structural changes made in these institutions contributed to the development of bilateral relations between Turkey and Central Asian Republics.

Keywords: Institutional Theory, TİKA, TÜRKPA, TÜRKSOY, The Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities

## ÖZ

### TÜRKİYE’NİN ORTA ASYA ÜLKELERİYLE İLİŞKİLERİNE KURUMSAL BİR YAKLAŞIM

Özden Eren

Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları Programı

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Pınar Akçalı

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Bu tezin amacı Türkiye ve beş Orta Asya Cumhuriyeti (Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Türkmenistan ve Tacikistan) arasında gelişen ilişkileri kurumlar bağlamında incelemektir. Bu çerçevede, dört temel kurum, Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Ajansı, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler Parlamenter Asamblesi ve Uluslararası Türk Kültür Teşkilatı, gerek yapısal özellikleri, gerekse bölgedeki faaliyetleri ve projeleri açısından incelenecektir.

Bu tez, kurumların Türkiye’nin Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri ile olan ilişkisine etkisini göstermek için kurumsal teoriyi temel alacaktır. Ayrıca, bu tez özellikle 2000’li yıllarda Türk Dış Politikasında oluşturulan yeni dinamiklere bağlı olarak gerçekleşen kurumsallaşma adımlarını ele alacaktır. Bu bağlamda tezde gerek yeni kurumların kurulması, gerekse varolan kurumlarda yapısal değişikliklerin yapılması sonucu gerçekleşen kurumsallaşma sürecinin Türkiye’nin Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri ile olan ikili ve bölgesel ilişkilerine katkı sağladığını savunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kurumsal Teori, TİKA, TÜRKPA, TÜRKSOY, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı

*To My Family*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AKP: Justice and Development Party

DAC: Development Assistance Committee

JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency and Development Aid

MDG: Millennium Development Goal

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

ODA: Official Development Assistance

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OIC: Organization of Islamic Conference

TGNA: Turkish Grand National Assembly

TİKA: Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency

TÜRKPA: Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries

TÜRKSOY: International Organization of Turkic Culture

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

YEE: Yunus Emre Institute

YTATB: Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union (SU) in 1991, Central Asian Republics have sought both to complete their economic transition in order to integrate with world markets by developing their commercial relations and by using the opportunity of having rich natural resources, and to accomplish their state-building, solidification of sovereignty and democratic transition processes by regular, free elections and rule of law. Central Asia, with its vital energy resources plays a significant role in terms of global energy security and trade corridors and has become a strategically important region for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.

Since the independence of Central Asian countries, due to border disputes and inter-ethnic conflicts, the region has witnessed the rivalry between regional and global powers such as Russia, USA and China. On one hand, the effect of Russia and its near abroad policy towards the region which reflects its security zone and its sphere of influence has continued.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Caspian oil and gas attracting USA and China, the US presence in Iran, NATO troops in Afghanistan and China's rising influence, as well as the proximity of Iran and Turkey to the region have intensified this power rivalry.<sup>2</sup>

In such an atmosphere, Turkey, being the first country recognizing the independence of Central Asian Republics, has taken important steps both to increase its influence on the region and to improve its bilateral relations. Turkey contributed actively to the promotion of democracy, stability, prosperity and security in Central Asia. Turkey

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<sup>1</sup> Tuncer, İ. (2002), *The Security Policies of the Russian Federation: The "Near Abroad" and Turkey*, *Turkish Studies*, EBSCO Publishing

<sup>2</sup> Kurecic, P. (2010), *The New Great Game: Rivalry of Geostrategic and Geoeconomies in Central Asia*, *Hrvatski Geografski Glasnik*, No. 72/1, p. 21

also developed its relations with these countries through strategic partnership agreements and various cooperation mechanisms. This general policy has been supported by Turkey's regular foreign aid, various projects and activities in the region. With the new dimension the Turkish foreign policy has taken in the 2000's, the growing emphasis has been given to institutional development in promoting in relations with the Central Asian Republics.

The main focus of the thesis is the development of institutional relations between Turkey and the five Central Asian Republics -Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan- in 2000's. To that end, four specific institutions that have played an important role in those relations are analyzed: The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency Directorate (Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Ajansı Başkanlığı, TİKA), The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, YTATB), the Yunus Emre Institute (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, YEE), the International Organization of Turkic Culture (Uluslararası Türk Kültürü Teşkilatı, TÜRKSOY) and the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler Parlamenter Asamblesi, TÜRKPA). The assistance aids, various economic, parliamentary, cultural and educational projects and activities of those institutions in the region are also analyzed in order to provide a comprehensive study of Turkey's relations with Central Asia at an institutional level.

As the initial step, TİKA was founded in 1992 with the aim of supporting state and nation building processes of Central Asian Republics, as well as the development of cultural and political rights, capacity building and complementing the deficiencies in the post-Soviet era in technical infrastructure in those countries. As such, it was a substantial step for establishing the foundation of Turkish-Central Asian relations in those countries. Established in 2010, YTATB mainly has four tasks: the coordination of activities on Turkish citizens abroad, the coordination of services provided to cognates and related communities by different institutions, foreign students in

Turkey, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>3</sup> The Yunus Emre Institute has become an important actor for cultural cooperation especially after the Turcology project was handed down to the institute. Besides the Turcology project, the institute contributes to another critical mission: the Turkish Cultural Centers.<sup>4</sup> TÜRKPA, established in 2008 according to an agreement signed in Istanbul by the heads of parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkey, carries the status of an international organization and is the main body strengthening parliamentary relations among the founding members. TÜRKSOY was established in 1993 in Almaty in order to support cultural restructuring in the region, to establish good and friendly relations with regional countries, to protect common Turkic culture, language and traditions to facilitate the transferring of the national history literature, culture and art.<sup>5</sup>

The thesis also aims to understand how the new foreign policy orientation of Turkey in the 2000's contributed to the establishment of a more rational and institutionalized framework for Turkish-Central Asian relations. This new orientation resulted in the emergence of new dimensions in terms of foreign policy both for Turkey and Central Asia. In this framework, the main research question of this study is how the process of institutionalization as well as the four key institutions affected the development of relations between Turkey and Central Asia in the post-Soviet era. Although the thesis focuses on the period after 1991, a specific emphasis is put on the new foreign policy outlook of Turkey in 2000's that contributed more to the process of institutionalization as compared to the previous decade.

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<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from the official website of The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, <http://www.ytb.gov.tr/index.php/kurumsal/hakkimizda.html> (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013)

<sup>4</sup> Detailed information on these projects and centers are provided in Chapter III.

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from the official website of TÜRKSOY <http://www.TÜRKSOY.org.tr/EN/belge/2-27273/goals.html> (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013)

## **1.1. Institutions and Institutional Change**

For the purposes of this thesis the institutional analysis is adopted. The institutional approach presents a framework within which the four institutions mentioned earlier can be placed in terms of Turkey's foreign policy towards Central Asia. In this part, firstly the main arguments of the theory including some key concepts such as governance and institutional change are given; then the historical background of the theory is traced; and finally, a comparison between the old and new institutionalism is described.

To begin with, the institutional theory is one of the important approaches analyzing the processes and factors effecting transformations in an organization. According to the institutional theory, attitudes and behaviors of citizens are certainly shaped by the opportunities and limitations that are designed by the institutional framework of government and politics. As such, institutional theory is based on the idea that peoples' choices, attitudes and values are created by alternatives provided by institutions of government and politics.<sup>6</sup> This is also important in order to understand cultural interactions between societies in the international arena. With reference to this theory, relations among societies will be shaped by institutional bodies. This approach is used in the following chapters of this thesis, especially while analyzing cultural diplomacy.

Governance, institutional change and international organizations are also important as specific concepts of the institutional theory, since they reflect the transformation process of institutions. Institutional change is a significant part of the institutional theory and is crucial for this thesis while analyzing the four institutions and emphasizing the effects of institutional transformations on Turkey's relations with Central Asia. According to institutional theory, after they are created, institutions generally change in a slow and gradual way. Institutional arrangements are not

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<sup>6</sup> Newton, K., Deth, J.W., *Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, New York, 2010, pp. 64-65

created automatically. However, they include compromises and settlements based on coalitional dynamics and they are always defenseless against change. In other words, pressures for institutional transformation are dynamic and present within the institutional structure.<sup>7</sup> The interaction between characteristics of the political context and principles of the institution are important to explain institutional change.<sup>8</sup>

There are different models and classifications describing institutional change. Jepperson gives four major types of institutional change: institutional formation stemming from social entropy, institutional development representing a continuation rather than creation, deinstitutionalization meaning an exit from institutionalization and reinstitutionalization which is departure from one institutional body and entry into another one institutional form with different principles. Contradictions with their environment, with other institutions and with social behavior may impel institutions for change.<sup>9</sup>

Mahoney & Thelen also offer four different models of institutional change. The first one is 'displacement', meaning the removal of existing rules and introduction of new ones. This may include radical shifts such as rapid and sudden breakdown of institutions and their replacement by new ones. The process is generally accompanied by revolutions. A slower and gradual change is also possible when new institutions are established by actors who were unsuccessful in the old system. The second model is 'layers'. In this model, new rules are attached to old rules. Different from the first model, there is not a total change of institutions or rules, but there are revisions and additions to the original core. If those amendments bring in

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<sup>7</sup>Mahoney J., Thelen K. A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change in Mahoney J., Thelen K., (eds) *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency and Power*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, pp. 8-14

<sup>8</sup> Mahoney J., Thelen K. A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change in Mahoney J., Thelen K., (eds) *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency and Power*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, p. 31

<sup>9</sup> Jepperson R. L., Institutions, Institutional Effects, in DiMaggio, P. J., Powell, W.W., (eds) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, pp. 152-153



modifications in the logic of the institution then the process may result in substantial changes. The third model is 'drift' and arises when rules remain formally the same but the influence of the institution alters because of changes in external conditions. In this model, the alteration of impact occurs when institutions cannot respond to environmental changes. The last model is 'conversion'. Here, rules remain formally the same just as the third model, however in this model, the ways in which rules are interpreted and implemented are transformed. In a political context where strong veto possibilities are present, low level of enforcement discretion may bring layers and high level of enforcement discretion may bring drift. Besides, if there is a weak veto possibility, low level of enforcement discretion may result in displacement and high level of enforcement discretion in conversion.<sup>10</sup>

Concerns and pressures stemming from the environment and some internal changes in the structure of the personnel, interests, and informal relations of the organization also result in some institutional changes. Although the level of institutionalism may change from an organization to another, external and internal transformations effect all organizations. Furthermore, during the transformation process, the leadership plays also an important role. Leaders of organizations may design a social structure embodying special values. Effective leaders are more likely to define institutional values of an organization.<sup>11</sup>

Institutional change may result in a break of the firm hierarchical structure of the organization and the rise of governance which is an important concept in institutional theory. In literature, government is the body including networks of organizations and institutions. Governance is about coordinating the activities of institutions, groups, individuals and organizations both in public and private sector.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mahoney J., Thelen K. A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change in Mahoney J., Thelen K., (eds) Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency and Power, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, pp. 15-17

<sup>11</sup> Scott W. R. (2003) Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, pp. 69-72

<sup>12</sup> Newton, K., Deth, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, New York, 2010, p. 88

Since this thesis focuses on institutions which shape Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries and two of those institutions are international organizations, the emphasis of the institutional theory on international relations and institutions is also examined. Today, institutions play a critical role in facilitating international dialogue, negotiations and conflict resolutions, as well as building acceptable behavior principles to further cooperation. Institutions may alleviate problems by bringing conflicting sides together and lessen distrust between them.<sup>13</sup> Institutions are also generated by major powers in order to determine their success. As such international institutions are used for the improvement of their international reputation and development of their policy of prestige.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of international organizations for the institutional theory, the international system is anarchic. States act rationally but this is not limited by the acquisition of power. International politics is based on common interests of states which come together on the basis of joint gains. Common interests of states result in cooperation with each other. Also, each state has incentive to refrain from cooperation. The institutional school in international politics mainly consists of federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism and interdependence approach. Neo-functionalism suggests that trans-border interdependencies stemming from technological and economic developments have increased the role of international organizations. According to the interdependence approach, conflictual situations, resulted by complex interdependencies across borders have led to an increase in significance of international organizations. International institutions can help states to cooperate successfully by reducing uncertainty and stabilizing states' expectations from each other. In neo-institutionalist approach also, there is always a requirement for international organizations since they avoid a worse situations in international arena

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<sup>13</sup> Goswami, N., Power Shifts in East Asia: Balance of Power vs. Liberal Institutionalism, *Perceptions*, Spring 2013, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 17-18

<sup>14</sup> Goswami, N., Power Shifts in East Asia: Balance of Power vs. Liberal Institutionalism, *Perceptions*, Spring 2013, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 21.

by helping to complete cooperative solutions through the provision of reliable information and the elimination of mutual uncertainties.<sup>15</sup>

The institutional theory was firstly used in Philip Selznick's "Foundations of a Theory of Organizations" in 1948 in order to examine the interactions of institutions with their entourages. For Selznick, "formal organization is the structural expression of rational action." Main characteristic of a concrete organizational system is that it is seen both as an economy and adaptive social structure.<sup>16</sup> In large organizations, deviations from the system become institutionalized by the establishment of informal associations and unwritten rules. Institutionalization serves for the creation of determined structural feature of formal organizations.<sup>17</sup>

Selznick focuses on the structure of organizations, rather than perceiving them just as tools. Organizations are rationally ordered tools created to achieve targets. Institutionalization is the process by which an organization gains a distinct character and reaches a specific competence. Therefore, institutionalization is a process of "the emergence of orderly, stable, socially integrating patterns out of unstable, loosely organized, or narrowly technical activities."<sup>18</sup>

In general, Selznick's institutional approach focused on the significance of history of the institution. Institutionalization, which was seen as a process by Selznick, gave value to the organization and promoted its stability. The process did not generally affect organizations which were more specialized and had more specific goals than others. Berger and Luckmann also emphasized the importance of an historical approach by stating that it is not possible to understand an institution sufficiently,

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<sup>15</sup> Rittberger, V., Zangl, B., Kruck, A., International Organizations, Palgrave Macmillan, Second Edition, New York, 2012, pp. 18-21

<sup>16</sup> Selznick, P., Foundations of the Theory of Organization, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, Feb, 1948, p. 25

<sup>17</sup> Selznick, P., Foundations of the Theory of Organization, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, Feb, 1948, p. 27

<sup>18</sup> Broom, L. & Selznick P (1955), *Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Evanston, IL: Row Peterson in Scott W. R. (2003) *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, p. 69

unless one understands its historical process.<sup>19</sup> As such, the transformation process of an organization can be evaluated with its natural history.<sup>20</sup>

According to Broom and Selznick, institutionalization is “the emergence of orderly, stable, socially integrating patterns out of unstable, loosely organized, or narrowly technical activities.”<sup>21</sup> Institutional inertia propels institutions seek to develop their own sphere and protect themselves. Institutions which are old and rooted may well influence current events.<sup>22</sup>

When we look at the historical background of the institutional theory, there are various stages in which the theory developed. The first examples were about normative institutionalism guided by the question of how institutions function by norms and values; rational choice institutionalism which proposed that behaviors of institutions are a work of rules and incentives; historical institutionalism in which initial decisions given in a specific policy are essential to understand the development process of that policy; empirical institutionalism expressing the importance of the governmental structure for the process of policy making; international institutionalism which is related with the international regime theory and assumes the presence of structured interactions within state level institutions; and societal institutions structuring relations between state and the society as well as interest groups.<sup>23</sup>

In the literature, the institutional theory analysis also includes a discussion on old and new versions of institutionalism. When we look at the old institutionalism, Peters

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<sup>19</sup> Tosi H. L. (2009) *Theories of Organization*, Sage, USA, p.217

<sup>20</sup> Scott W. R. (2003) *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, pp. 69-72

<sup>21</sup> Selznick, P., Institutionalism “Old” and “New”, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 2, June 1996, p. 271

<sup>22</sup> Newton, K., Deth, J.W., *Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, New York, 2010, p. 9

<sup>23</sup> Peters, G., *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The ‘New Institutionalism’*, Continuum, Second Edition, Great Britain, 2005, pp. 19-20.

analyses five main pillars covering late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first one is legalism emphasizing the central role of law in government. The second one is structuralism meaning that structures determine institutional behavior. The third one is holism emphasizing the importance of formal-legal analysis. The historical foundations is the fourth pillar used by old institutionalism stressing that political systems were entrenched in their historical development and individual behavior created by political elites. The final one is normative analysis in which norms and values had an important place in how institutions are established.<sup>24</sup>

According to new institutionalism, institutions are the structures within which individual behaviors are shaped. In other words, actors behave according to the institutional structure. After their establishment, institutions seek to persist until situations compelling for change. Institutions are partly products of the society and politics that they also shape.<sup>25</sup> New institutionalism has deconstructionist elements since it focuses on the diversity and complexity of goals.<sup>26</sup> Typical large organizations are seen as a coalition ruled by variable rationalities and authorities rather than a unified structure of coordination.<sup>27</sup>

For DiMaggio and Powell, new institutionalism denounces of rational actor models and approach to institutions as independent variables referring to the cognitive and cultural understanding as well as supra-individual units of analysis that cannot be degraded to combinations of individual behaviors.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Peters, G., *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The 'New Institutionalism'*, Continuum, Second Edition, Great Britain, 2005, pp. 6-11

<sup>25</sup> Newton, K., Deth, J.W., *Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, New York, 2010, p. 86

<sup>26</sup> Peters, G., *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The 'New Institutionalism'*, Continuum, Second Edition, Great Britain, 2005, p. 3

<sup>27</sup> Selznick, P., Institutionalism "Old" and "New", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 2, June 1996, p. 275

<sup>28</sup> DiMaggio, P. J., Powell, W.W., (eds) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, p. 8

For the purposes of this thesis institutional theory is useful due to the importance it ascribes for institutions both in policy-making process and international relations in a country as well as the emphasis on the transformation process witnessed by institutions. International and regional relations are no longer carried only by intergovernmental contacts and high-level visits. Other actors are involved in the process. Those actors generally act within institutional structures.

This thesis specifically uses the theoretical approaches such as normative institutionalism, the importance of institutions in international dialogue, 'layers' model of institutional change, institutional development model of institutional change, the importance of the history in institutional transformation, international institutionalism and neo-institutionalist approach to the international institutions in order to determine the place of the four institutions in the theoretical framework.

When we look at Turkey's relations with Central Asia, TİKA, YTATB, TÜRKPA and TÜRKSOY can be described as institutions which are intensively involved in the process of establishing and developing these relations. Their mere establishment represents the institutionalization process of Turkey's relations with five Central Asian republics. As such, TİKA was established as the institution responsible for foreign aid towards regional countries, YTATB was established as a diaspora institution which is also related with the relative communities of Turkey including Central Asia. Likewise, TÜRKPA has institutionalized Turkey's parliamentary relations with two regional countries Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, TÜRKSOY is an important international structure in terms of institutionalizing and developing cultural relations between Turkey and regional countries.

Other than their importance as institutions for Turkey's regional policy, two of those four main institutions have witnessed a process of institutional change in order to function in a more effective way. This change will be discussed in a more detailed way in the chapters in which TİKA and TÜRKSOY are analyzed.

In addition, the discussion on the place of institutions in international relations is also important for this thesis. On the one hand, TİKA and YTATB are national

institutions influencing Turkey's foreign relations because of their scope of area. On the other hand, TÜRKPA and TÜRKSOY are international organizations by which Turkey's regional policies are shaped in the framework of parliamentary and cultural diplomacy.

Finally it must also be emphasized that for the purposes of this thesis some references will be made in relevant chapters to development assistance, diaspora politics, parliamentary diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and soft power. As such TİKA will be analyzed as an institution using development assistance; YTATB will be examined by using the diaspora politics, TÜRKPA will be evaluated by using the parliamentary diplomacy and TÜRKSOY will be observed by using cultural diplomacy as a soft power.

## **1.2. Methodology and Outline**

In this study, a qualitative analysis is used in order to evaluate the impact and place of institutions and the process of institutionalization in Turkey's relations with Central Asian Republics. In this context, the activities, projects and development assistance of the four institutions mentioned earlier are analyzed. Furthermore, statements and speeches of Turkish officials, media archives, official websites and publications of those institutions are also used. The study also incorporates those ideas, comments and information provided by the authorities of the institutions in the interviews conducted in July 2013 by the author, as well as the coordination offices of TİKA located in Ashgabat, Dushanbe and Bishkek.<sup>29</sup> The thesis also utilizes secondary sources such as books, journal articles, as well as statistics, figures, tables, reports provided in relevant websites.

The thesis is composed of five chapters. After the Introduction, the second chapter examines the historical background and the current dynamics of Turkey's relations

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<sup>29</sup> See appendix for questions of interviews

with Central Asian Republics. This chapter is important not only to understand the importance of the region for Turkey and its place in Turkish foreign policy; but also to mention the contribution of the institutionalization process in Turkish foreign policy towards Central Asia.

The third chapter focuses mainly on two institutions: TİKA and YTATB, although YEE is also briefly discussed as a new institution having close ties with both of these institutions. The basic aim of establishment of these institutions, their structures, projects and activities in the region are analyzed in a detailed manner in this chapter.

The fourth chapter is devoted to TÜRKPA and TÜRKSOY. The same criteria used for analyzing TİKA and YTATB are also used here. The classification of institutions in those two chapters is designed according to their being national or international organizations.

The conclusion presents a brief summary of the thesis and discusses the findings within the theoretical framework presented in the introduction.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **GENERAL OUTLOOK TO TURKEY'S CENTRAL ASIAN POLICY**

In this chapter, relations between Turkey and Central Asian Republics after their independence will be reviewed. Firstly, an analysis of Turkey's being the model country for the first years after the independence of these states will be discussed. This will be followed by Turkey's Central Asian policy and changes in this policy in the last decades in the framework of newly emerging dynamics in Turkish foreign policy. After this discussion, a general description of relations is given in order to understand the importance of institutions for bilateral and regional relations.

Immediately after independence of Central Asian Republics, Turkey's policy towards the region was shaped by great enthusiasm and a desire of being the model country for those republics. However, despite the historical, linguistic, religious and cultural similarities, due to the lack of professionalism and the emotionally-loaded approach of Turkey, as well as the disconnection between Turkey and Central Asia in terms of political, cultural and social structures, the level of relations did not meet the initial expectations. What has been different in the 2000's was the acceleration of the institutionalization process with more rational and systematic approach in policies towards Central Asia.

#### **2.1. The Aftermath of Independence**

After the collapse of the SU in 1991, with the declaration of independence, politically unstable, economically dependent and institutionally unprepared Republics were involved in a process of integration with the world markets and

transition in terms of state-building, nation-building and democratization. They had to manage all this within the context of fragile domestic dynamics such as the heterogeneous demographic structures, and regional factors such as the competition among Russia, USA and China.

Although Central Asia is a landlocked region, with its significant natural resources, it has a great economic potential. Since the region shares borders with Afghanistan, the Middle East, Russia and the Caucasus, its geopolitical position is critical. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan had served as energy producers for the entire USSR. After 1991, however, with their fragile economic infrastructure, Central Asian republics experienced a difficult transition to free-market economy.<sup>30</sup>

With the collapse of the SU, Turkey has become an important bond between the European countries and the Asian ones; an important partner of the USA, and supporter of the regional stability. Turkey aimed to have a dominant position in the area after independence as well as Azerbaijan. Turkey is the first country that recognized those states after 1991. However, in the Western world and Russia, this recognition created a concern about a potential rise of pan-Turkism.<sup>31</sup>

In this period, Turkey was challenged by new problems and/or issues such as the stagnation of relations with the European Community in the 1980's, and emerging Turkic states in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Eurasia as a foreign policy area became a reality for the first time. Between 1991 and 1995, Turkey being the first country to recognize the independence of regional countries, aimed to become a model country by seeking to decrease Russian dominance in the region. However, there was no systematic program. In other words, in that period, there was a lack of rationality. Thus, after that period, it was clear that the power vacuum that occurred in the region would be once again filled by Russia. For this reason, after 1995 with a

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<sup>30</sup> Kılıç, G., Turkey's Foreign Aid Policy Towards Central Asia From A Comparative Perspective, Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School Of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, April 2011, p. 29-32

<sup>31</sup> Kassimeris, C. (2010). Turkey's Foreign Policy Options: Europe, the USA, or Central Asia?, *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 321-336.

better analysis of regional realities, it became apparent that Turkey should follow a more rational regional policy and the approach of exclusion of Russia was eliminated.<sup>32</sup>

Turkey declared its recognition of the independence of 15 newly emerging republics on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1991. Until President Turgut Özal's death in 1993, Turkey's policy towards the region was dynamic and emotionally loaded with an exaggerated rhetoric which heavily focused on the emotional side of Turkish-Central Asian people. More than 140 agreements on political, military, economic and cultural fields were signed with the Central Asian Republics and TİKA and TÜRKSÖY were established in 1992 and in 1993 respectively. The first Summit of the Heads of the Turkic Speaking States held in October 1992 and the Convention Friendship, Brotherhood, and Corporation of Turkish States and Groups held in March 1993 were some other main developments in that period.<sup>33</sup>

In the first Summit of Turkish Speaking States Heads of States Tajikistan could not participate because of the civil war and Kazakh officials rejected the recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in the joint statement about the results of the Summit. In the second Summit in 1994, there was a decrease in the emphasis on ethnicity. The third Summit was held on 27-29<sup>th</sup> August 1995 in Bishkek; the fourth on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1996 in Tashkent and the fifth on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1998 in Astana. In those Summits, member countries were presented at a high level; however, this was changed in the following Summits for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In the Tashkent Summit, a permanent secretariat was decided to be established. The regulation of this secretariat was adopted in the Astana Summit.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Denizhan, E., Türkiye'nin Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Politikası ve TİKA, *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2010, pp. 18

<sup>33</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H. (2012), Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri, in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, pp. 486-487

<sup>34</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H., (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri, in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında*

During the first years after the collapse of the SU, Turkey was promoted by the West as a model country for Central Asian republics. This was also compatible with Turkey's interests in the region. There were two main reasons for Turkey's interest in Central Asia. The first one was cultural affinity as Turkey and Central Asian Republics were believed to share same/similar characteristics in terms of ethnicity, religion, history and language. The other reason was basically about Turkey's new place in the international arena. Since Turkey, as a member of NATO, had shared borders with the former SU and defended 37 percent of the NATO borders, it had always played a critical role in the security of the region. After 1991, it was hoped that because of their cultural affinity, these Republics would be regarded as natural allies, supporting Turkey in the international arena.<sup>35</sup>

However, in the 1990's, Turkish decision-makers started to be more active in searching for possibilities of cooperation in the region. Moreover, relations between Turkey and the European Community were stagnant and Turkey required support in the international arena for critical issues such as Cyprus. On the other hand, Western powers worried that the power vacuum in the region after the dissolution of the SU might be filled by radical Islamic fundamentalism by Iran. Western promotion of the Turkish model provided Turkey new instruments; it meant a ratification of Turkey's strategic position in the region after the Cold War. Thus, Turkey was content with this Western promotion of the Turkish Model.<sup>36</sup> In 1992, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Catherine Lalumière paid a visit to the former Soviet republics of Central Asia and declared that Turkey, being a secular, democratic, Muslim-majority country applying liberal free market policy and aiming to achieve Western standards, would be a valid model of development for those republics.<sup>37</sup> In other words,

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*Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, p. 488-490

<sup>35</sup> Bal, İ. (2000) *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics-The Rise and Fall of the 'Turkish Model'*, Ashgate, Burlington, USA, pp. 43-47.

<sup>36</sup> Bal, İ. (2000) *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics-The Rise and Fall of the 'Turkish Model'*, Ashgate, Burlington, USA, p. 77

<sup>37</sup> Mango, A., *The Turkish Model*, Middle Eastern Studies, Vol.29, No.4, October 1993, p. 726

Turkey's experience in secularism, democracy, and transition to market economy from a centrally planned economy, as well as cultural, religious and linguistic affinity between Turkey and those republics were main reasons for the Western promotion of Turkey as a model country in the region.<sup>38</sup>

In 1995, Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller paid two visits to the region. Those visits were fruitful in terms of economic and energy cooperation; a gas purchase agreement was signed with Turkmenistan and Turkish Petroleum Corporation was granted oil exploration permission for four different areas. Çiller would focus on the concept of "Turkish World" and promote the idea in the society.<sup>39</sup>

In time, however, the popularity of the idea of the Turkish model began to decline due to several reasons. First, it became clear that the influence of Iran in the region was limited and there was no concrete danger of radical Islam. Second, it became more evident that the power vacuum would be filled by Russian's near abroad policy.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the Central Asian Republics became more concerned about pan-Turkism, especially after the 1992 Summit of the Heads of the Turkic Speaking States. Turkey was blamed for Turanism as it was seen as a new big brother after Russia who had a political agenda of unifying all "Turkish" states. So the "Turkish World" discourse also was not embraced by the Central Asian Republics.<sup>41</sup> Finally, it was understood that Turkey had important domestic problems of its own, especially in terms of ethnic and religious tensions, resulting in uncertainties about its own

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<sup>38</sup> Bal, İ. (2000) Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics-The Rise and Fall of the 'Turkish Model', Ashgate, Burlington, USA, p.110

<sup>39</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H., (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri in Aydingün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, pp. 498-503

<sup>40</sup> Aydın, M., Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkish Studies, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 2004, Taylor & Francis Ltd. pp.1-22

<sup>41</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H., (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri in Aydingün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, pp. 565-572

political stability.<sup>42</sup> Turkey had many weaknesses in the military and security fields in the area and could not afford the high costs of military operations.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, Eurasia was not a familiar region for Turkey, especially during the Cold War years in which Turkey was in the Western bloc, unlike Central Asian countries which had a socialist rule. As such, Turkey was unprepared for the disintegration of the SU, with no experts on the region. Therefore, by the end of the first decade, Turkey's regional policy and its relations with the Central Asian Republics have not met the initial expectations of both Turkey and those Republics.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, there were several areas in which Turkey could have a positive contribution in its relations with Central Asian Republics. In terms of military cooperation, for example, Turkey supported the participation of Central Asian Republics in various NATO programs and applications. Turkey provided training in military fields. In 1997, beyond American and Russian soldiers, Turkish soldiers and officers participated in peace-keeping and humanitarian aid operation of Central Asian Peacekeeping Battalion (CENTRASBAT) including Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek garrisons. By 1998, 2300 Central Asian cadets graduated from Turkey's military institutions. Furthermore, military education was provided to Central Asian soldiers in the education office established in Ankara in the framework of NATO Partnership for Peace project. Until 2001 Turkey was the only NATO member that was engaged in cooperation with regional states.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Bal, İ. (2000) Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics-The Rise and Fall of the 'Turkish Model', Ashgate, Burlington, USA, p.181

<sup>43</sup> Peimani, H., (1998) Regional Security and the Future of Central Asia, the Competition of Iran, Turkey and Russia, Praeger, Westport Connecticut, London, p. 85

<sup>44</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H., (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, p. 504

<sup>45</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H., (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve

Concern with energy sources was another important pillar in Turkey's relations with Central Asian Republics. One important step was the agreement for building Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline by Turkmen, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Kazakh and Turkish leaders on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1999. In fact, for those republics, closer ties with Turkey would provide a secure route for the transportation of natural resources.<sup>46</sup>

The global economic crisis and the September 11 events were two main dynamics influencing the international relations in 2000's. The involvement of actors such as the USA and China increased dramatically after these events. US presence in the region became visible with the war in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The US policy towards Central Asia revolved around the containment of the region and controlling its rich oil and gas resources. After 2000's, as will be analyzed later, Turkey's relations with Caucasia and Central Asia began to deepen in terms of a more rational and institutional framework and be shaped in line with the regional policy of USA.<sup>47</sup>

However, Turkish foreign policy orientation and parameters would change starting with 2002 general elections and the appointment of Ahmet Davutoğlu first as a foreign policy mentor to Prime Minister and the leader of Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development Party), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then after 2007 as the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs. The next part of the chapter will take a closer look at how Turkish foreign policy has been re-shaped by the AKP rule and Davutoğlu.

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Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, p. 504

<sup>46</sup> Aras, B, Turkey's Policy in the Former Soviet South: Assets and Options.,*Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1, Spring 2000, London, p. 42

<sup>47</sup> Denizhan, E., Türkiye'nin Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Politikası ve TİKA, , *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, Cilt 2, sayı 1, 2010, p. 22

## 2.2. Turkey's Relations with Central Asia in the 2000's

During the 2000's, some new instruments were integrated in the foreign policy approach which was shaped mainly by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Davutoğlu. The first instrument is the formulation of foreign policy and the approach that there is no hierarchy of priorities in foreign issues. The second instrument is the realization of the pro-active and rhythmic diplomacy. One main target of this mechanism is having “zero-problem” with neighbors and providing high regional cooperation. Memberships in different international organizations such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), having a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, becoming an observer in the Arab League, the African Union and the Organization of the American States are examples of this approach. The third mechanism is Turkey's active involvement in cases of crises especially in surrounding regions. The fourth instrument is the formation of an all-inclusive foreign policy meaning that diplomacy includes all regional actors. The final mechanism is about getting the support of NGO's, civil groups and business circles in foreign policy issues.<sup>48</sup>

Davutoğlu, by seeking to revise the status quo in the traditional Turkish Foreign Policy, introduced a new understanding of zero problems with neighbors in his book *Strategic Depth* and suggested that Turkey should develop its relations with Middle East, Russia, Central Asia, and Balkan countries.<sup>49</sup> Regarding the principle of zero-problem, Davutoğlu argued that this principle would now become the main pillar describing the Turkish foreign policy, it would spill-over the region, then the world; and with this principle, the Turkish society has no longer saw Russia, Greece and Iran as enemies.

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<sup>48</sup> Aras, B., The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No.3, 2009, pp. 132-135

<sup>49</sup> Hansen, S. (2010). Ottomania: Turkey's Imperial Dreams. *The New Republic*, 8 July 2010.



By the term rhythmic diplomacy, Davutoğlu meant a dynamic and harmonious diplomacy<sup>50</sup> with a multi-polar approach. This new attitude was reflected in the journal *Economist* which focused on Turkey's membership in G-20, its temporary membership in the United Nations Security Council and its important place in the Muslim world. In the journal it was stated that before the AKP government, Turkey was a 'peripheral' country; however, currently Turkey has become a 'pivotal' country.<sup>51</sup> Peace-keeping emerged as another main target of AKP in foreign relations. According to Aras, Turkey's becoming a peacemaker in the region was a consequence of domestic changes bringing new outlook to the relations with neighbors.<sup>52</sup>

The principle of Strategic Depth developed by Davutoğlu further includes the idea that the geostrategic position of a country affects a nation's importance in international arena. The location of Turkey and the control of the straits are two important elements increasing Turkey's geopolitical importance. The Ottoman heritage of Turkey and its attachments to Central Asian, Middle Eastern and Balkan states have made the country an important power in the region.<sup>53</sup>

In this general framework, for Davutoğlu, Central Asia is one of regions most affected by the end of the Cold War when geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-cultural harmonization problems became main regional issues. Understanding new parameters of the global position of the Central Asian states would clarify the main elements of Turkey's policies towards the region.<sup>54</sup> Davutoğlu gives three main

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<sup>50</sup> Akgün, M., Ahmet Davutoğlu: "Eksen Kayması Diyen 'Siz Karışmayın' Demek İstiyor", *Görüş Dergisi- TÜSİAD*, No. 63, August 2010, p. 16

<sup>51</sup> A Special Report on Turkey: Anchors Aweigh, *The Economist*, Vol. 397, No. 8705, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010,

<sup>52</sup> Aras, B. (2009). Turkey's Rise in the Greater Middle East: Peace-Building in the Periphery, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 29.

<sup>53</sup> Larrabee, S. F. (2010). Turkey's New Geopolitics, *Survival*, 52:2, p. 159.

<sup>54</sup> Davutoğlu, A. (2001). Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, p.455

factors determining the international position of Central Asia. The first one is the geographic and geopolitical factor. With the end of the Cold War, the most important change in Central Asian geopolitics has been the disappearance of the static balance of Eurasia leading to the emergence of a critical geopolitical space. This geopolitical space has opened a possible area of action for both regional actors in Eurasian politics and inter-regional actors in Central Asia. For the first time, a new strategic conjuncture which involved Central Asian dynamics in international politics occurred. In Central Asia, the new geopolitics is highly dynamic and includes regional, continental and global balances which are interconnected and which affect each other. The role that Turkey has played in this new structure would determine its future influence in the region.

The second factor is the historical and geo-cultural one. The regional countries, by gaining their independence, have witnessed a new conflicting and complex process of transition. This transition process can create an area of action for Turkey if it can implement a rational strategy complying with a psychological solidarity strengthening the historical and geo-cultural base which would direct regional nations to an understanding of a common fate. Turkey's permanent emphasis on geo-cultural depth in Eurasian strategy may increase doubts of other important regional actors. However, Turkey's ignorance of the geo-cultural depth in the region would harm the capability of regional actors to share a common strategy.

The third factor determining Central Asia's international place for Davutoğlu is the demographic and geo-economic one. Central Asia, with its rich natural resources, has a high capacity for utilizing its human power. The region, besides its rich reserves of natural gas and oil, also has mineral resources which are strategically important. The issue of transporting natural resources from Central Asia to the international circle of economic and political production system is critical. The existence of an economic and political structure providing rational use of natural resources would determine

the importance of the region.<sup>55</sup> Davutoğlu would also focus on Turkey's relations with Central Asia and state that Turkey was quite unprepared when those republics became independent, resulting in hasty declarations with no rational as well as institutional basis.

For Davutoğlu, the absence of readiness in Turkey for such a transformation in the region had two main reasons: historical and ideological. As a result of the historical past of Turkey, the Turkish foreign policy was compatible with the diplomatic styles of European powers. This resulted in lack of experience for Asian-centered diplomacy. Ideologically, with the Westernization process, the psychological, theoretical, and institutional preparation towards Central Asia had a secondary importance. Such factors made coordination between Turkey's Central Asian policy and other regional policies impossible. The place and importance of Central Asia in the general strategy of Turkish foreign policy has not been deeply analyzed. Establishing regional policies on Central Asia, Western Asia and the Middle East without strategically determining priorities, created a foreign policy structure which could be easily affected by international changes.<sup>56</sup>

The changing focus of global actors towards Central Asia after the Cold War directly affected Turkey's geopolitical importance as a continental and regional power. Turkey was the only NATO member having Asian depth. This inescapably made Turkey a strategic partner for USA in regional politics. In terms of being a link between Central Asia and the Western world, a competition emerged between Russia, Iran and Turkey. For Davutoğlu, in this competition Russia tried to use its old hegemonic power on the region; Iran, despite its isolation in the international system, tried to influence the region with *realpolitik*; and Turkey sought to influence the region by getting the support of global international powers, especially by USA.

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<sup>55</sup> Davutoğlu, A. (2001). Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, pp. 456-463

<sup>56</sup> Davutoğlu, A. (2001). Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, pp. 486-490

This competition caused a decrease in Turkey's power in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Instead, for Davutoğlu Turkey had to determine its strategic priorities within the Asian European equation and develop its relation with Central Asia according to those priorities.<sup>57</sup>

In early 2000's, Turkish authorities emphasized the importance of developing economic and commercial relations with Central Asian countries. Prime Minister Erdoğan emphasized many times the importance of union of language, culture, history and religion between Turkey and Turkic republics during his visits to the region. However, he was not referring to any sort of political union in his speeches. This has been changed in 2007 when Erdoğan participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Turkish Congress. At this time, he talked about the Union of the Turkic World and advised improving relations based on the multilateral institutionalization.<sup>58</sup>

In this period, concrete and significant steps have been taken in terms of the institutionalization of Turkey's relations with Central Asia. Those steps basically include the establishment of the Yunus Emre Institute in 2007, TÜRKPA in 2008, the Turkic Council (Türk Konseyi) in 2009, YTATB in 2010. Since the Yunus Emre Institute, TÜRKPA and YTATB will be analyzed more in the following sections, here only brief information is given about the Turkic Council.

The Turkic Council was established by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey as an international organization with the Nakhchivan Agreement which was signed by presidents of member states on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009 during the 9<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Turkic Speaking Countries, held on 2-3<sup>th</sup> October 2009 in Nahchivan. The highest decision making organ of the organization responsible for the regional cooperation is the Council of Heads of States meeting once a year. Council of Foreign Ministers, Council of Elders, and the Chairman-in-Office are other main

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<sup>57</sup> Davutoğlu, A. (2001). *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, pp. 492-499

<sup>58</sup> Özdamar, R. *Türkiye'nin Orta Asya Politikası Eksiklikler ve Öneriler*, April 2010, retrieved from <http://tr.caspianweekly.org/ana-kategoriler/orta-asya/1555-tuerkyenn-orta-asya-politkasi-eksklkler-ve-oenerler.html> (accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013)

organs of the organization. The main target of the council is deepening the cooperation among member states, contributing to the regional peace and stability, providing coordination to combat international terrorism, separatism, trans-border crimes, and ensuring rule of law, good governance and protection of human rights.

The last Summit of the Turkic Speaking Countries which was held in Istanbul in 2010 was important in terms of the language used during the meeting. In the earlier meetings the language of the Summit was Russian. However, this time the official language was Turkish. Every country used its own language. This was an important step for linguistic partnership in Turkic world.<sup>59</sup> The first Summit of the council, after it has been transformed into the ‘Turkic Council’ was held in Almaty on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011 on the theme of economic cooperation.<sup>60</sup> The second Summit meeting of the Turkic Council was held in Bishkek on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012 with the theme of Cooperation in Education, Science and Culture.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the establishments of these institutions and organizations, another important step for the development of bilateral relations with Central Asian countries was the establishment of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council with Kazakhstan in 2012 and Kyrgyzstan in 2011. This mechanism being a new instrument in Turkish foreign policy, serves to formulate common strategies and policies as well as taking decisions about both bilateral relations and global developments. Thus, with this mechanism, relations are institutionalized with countries which are strategically important for Turkey.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Kohen S., Türkçe Konuşmak Yeterli Değil, *Milliyet*, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010, retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turkcekonusmakyeterlidegil/samikohen/dunya/yazardetayarsiv/15.10.2010/1291584/default.htm> (Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2012)

<sup>60</sup> Place and Role of Turkic Council, TURKPA and TÜRKSÖY in developing Relationships among Turkic-Speaking States. Report of the Second Meeting of the Commission on International Relations (11<sup>th</sup> December 2012), TURKPA, p. 2

<sup>61</sup>Türk Konseyi 2. Zirvesi Bişkek’te düzenlendi, retrieved from <http://www.turkkon.org/icerik.php?no=158> (accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013)

<sup>62</sup> Retrieved from <http://kdk.gov.tr/sayilarla/yuksekk-duzeyli-isbirligi-mekanizmalari/8> (accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2013)

In addition, during this period, TİKA underwent significant structural transformation. In 2001 acting more independently from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it became a legal entity and a coordination institution in the implementation of soft power in Turkey's foreign policy. In 2005, TİKA was equipped with the authority of finding its own sources of funds for foreign assistance.<sup>63</sup>

As pointed out in a speech given in 2011 by the President of TİKA Serdar Çam, the 58 percent of TİKA's projects was realized in Central Asia.<sup>64</sup> TİKA is a concrete model of the institutionalization process in the new activism period in foreign policy including the new social and political actors.<sup>65</sup>

To conclude, it is possible to suggest that Turkey's relations with Central Asia in 2000's have a tendency to be more institutionalized in many fields. This was a result of many factors such as the domestic changes in Turkey, political transformations that took place in Central Asian countries and regional policies of US-China-Russia. Refraining from the mission of being the model or the leader state for the region, Turkey now had the opportunity to develop regional relations on a more rational basis.<sup>66</sup>

The next chapter traces an analysis on national institutions, TİKA, YTATB and YEE in terms of their structure as well as activities in the region, with a specific emphasis on foreign policy concepts of development assistance, diaspora and soft power.

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<sup>63</sup> Adıyaman Ş. (2011), TİKA: Türkiye'nin Küresel Dış Politika Enstrümanı retrieved from [http://www.bilgesam.org/tr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1500:tka-tuerkiyenin-kueresel-d-politika-enstrueman&catid=168:ortadogu-analizler](http://www.bilgesam.org/tr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1500:tka-tuerkiyenin-kueresel-d-politika-enstrueman&catid=168:ortadogu-analizler) (accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013)

<sup>64</sup> TİKA Başkanı Çam: Biz Yardımdan öte 'paylaşımı' amaçlıyoruz, on 12th November 2012, retrieved on February 2013 from <http://www.dunyatimes.com/article/tika-baskani-cam-biz-yardimdan-ote-paylasimi-amacliyoruz-45564.html> (accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

<sup>65</sup> Kardaş, T.; Erdağ R.(2012), Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA, *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi (Journal of Academic Inquiries)*, Cilt:7, Sayı 1

<sup>66</sup> Oran, B. Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, yorumlar, Cilt III: 2001-2012, İletişim yayınları, İstanbul 2013, pp. 468-469

## **CHAPTER III**

### **TURKISH COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (TİKA)**

The first part of this chapter mainly gives the definition and description of development assistance and foreign aid in general and a brief summary of the OECD-DAC principles. Then, the structure and reasons of the establishment of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) and projects and activities of the institution in Central Asia will be discussed with the aim of reflecting the significance of the institution for Turkey's regional policies especially for the last decade.

#### **3.1. Development Assistance and Foreign Aid in General**

In order to analyze TİKA's activities and projects in the region and the influence of the institution on Turkey's relations with Central Asian Republics, as well as Turkey's regional policy, one should firstly define and explain the development assistance and foreign aid concepts. For this reason, this chapter begins with a general look at the development assistance by giving some definitions and by evaluating the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which was signed in 2005 and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals which were composed in 2000.

A basic definition of official development assistance (ODA) is made by Führer as follows:

ODA consists of flows to developing countries and multilateral institutions provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies, each transaction of which meets the following test: a) it is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective, and b) it is concessional in character and contains a grant element of at least 25 percent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent).<sup>67</sup>

OECD is a leading organization both in determining principles of foreign aid and in reporting donor countries' aids in recipient ones through DAC. In a more detailed description, the Development Assistance Group (DAG) of OECD was formed in 1960 in order to ensure the coordination among donor country members such as Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Commission of the European Economic Community. With the resolution of the Common Aid Effort in 1961, DAG became a committee, DAC.<sup>68</sup>

According to DAC definition, foreign aid is official development assistance provided by states, local governments and other administrative agencies to the developing countries with the aim of economic development and welfare in those states. Foreign aid is built on different parameters as diplomacy, politics, development, poverty and trade. Furthermore, aid activities contain projects and programs, cash transfers, delivery of goods, training courses, research projects, debt relief operations and contributions of NGO's.<sup>69</sup> As it is seen foreign aid is a very exclusive term which can be implemented both by national institutions and NGO's. Certainly, all types of aid have impact on both intergovernmental relations and relations between nations as well as on cultural interactions. However, this chapter includes only aids of Turkey's national institutions in Central Asia. Donor countries generally establish an institution in order to realize this task in a more effective way.

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<sup>67</sup> Führer, H., A The Story of Official Development Assistance - A History of the Development Assistance Committee and the Development Co-Operation Directorate in Dates, Names and Figures, OECD, Paris, 1996, p. 24

<sup>68</sup>Führer, H., A The Story of Official Development Assistance - A History of the Development Assistance Committee and the Development Co-Operation Directorate in Dates, Names and Figures, OECD, Paris, 1996, p.8.

<sup>69</sup>DAC Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts, retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/dacglossaryofkeytermsandconcepts.htm> (accessed on 10th July 2013)



Foreign aid should be based on the requirements and benefits of the recipient country which are mainly democratization or economic development. For an effective foreign aid, the aim should be clearly defined and strategies should be realized in line with this aim.<sup>70</sup> Foreign aid, which is generally affected by the public opinion of the donor country, carries the potential to soften traditional political conflicts and to support reconciliation of civilizations by bringing about cultural interaction between parties.<sup>71</sup>

Foreign aid emerged in the post Second World War era and was institutionalized by the discipline of development economics.<sup>72</sup> The first country to establish a ministry responsible for foreign aid was France (in 1961). This was followed by Germany and then by USA with the establishment of US Agency for International Development (USAID). In 1962, Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (OTCA) was established. This institution would later become Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2003.<sup>73</sup>

The 1960's witnessed the establishment process of foreign aid institutions throughout the world. When we come to the 1970's, there was a significant expansion in the role of NGO's and aid was generally directly provided to poor countries by some projects in the field of education, health care and water-supply. In those years aid was seen only as a tool for humanitarian aid and development. However, in the 1980's the term became more complex and effectiveness gained importance. In the post-Cold War era, on the one hand, with the changing political agenda ODA declined significantly. On the other hand the number of recipient countries has increased and the term aid was redefined. In 1996, main principles of foreign aid

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<sup>70</sup> Öztürk H., Öztürk S., Türkiye'nin Dış Yardım Stratejisi: Sorunlar ve Öneriler, Report No.54, Bilge Adamlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (BİLGESAM), December 2012, p. 19

<sup>71</sup> Akçay, E., Bir Dış Politika Enstrümanı Olarak Türk Dış Yardımları, Turgut Özal Üniversitesi Yayınları, Ankara 2012, pp. 36-37

<sup>72</sup> Kendirci, B., Üçkuş, Ö., Teoriden Uygulamaya Dış Yardım, *Sayıştay Dergisi*, No. 86, July-September 2012, pp. 59-61.

<sup>73</sup> Akçay, E., Bir Dış Politika Enstrümanı Olarak Türk Dış Yardımları, Turgut Özal Ünivertisesi Yayınları No. 005, Ankara, 2012, p. 22

were defined by the OECD as follows: the integration of aid recipients into recipient-owned and led policy context, the improvement of accountability of recipient countries' activities, effective partnership between donor and recipient countries as well as coordination and harmonization in activities of donor countries.<sup>74</sup>

Moreover, United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) constitute another important turning point for development assistance. ODA is generally expected to be compatible with MDGs which was declared in 2000. The eight MDGs are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality and empower women, to reduce child mortality, to improve maternal health, to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and to ensure environmental sustainability and to develop global partnership.<sup>75</sup>

Besides MDGs, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which was signed in 2005 is another significant step taken towards ODA. The main goal of the declaration was to develop the quality of aid and its effects on the development of the recipient country. Many implementation measures and monitoring system was established by the declaration for affectivity and progress. In this framework, there are five main principles of an impressive aid. The first one is 'ownership' or supporting developing countries to set their own plans for the decrease of poverty and corruption. The second one is 'alignment' signifying that donor countries would follow these objectives and use local systems. Another one is harmonization or the coordination among donor countries to share information to avoid replications. The fourth one is 'results' reflecting result oriented focus of countries' activities. Finally, the last

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<sup>74</sup> Kılıç, G., Turkey's Foreign Aid Policy Towards Central Asia From A Comparative Perspective A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School Of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University 2011pp. 18-21

<sup>75</sup> Millennium Development Goals, retrieved from the site <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html> (accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

principle is ‘mutual accountability’ connoting that donor countries and their partners would be accountable for development results.<sup>76</sup>

The term development assistance is also defined and categorized by TİKA. According to a TİKA report on this issue, the development assistance, which is one of the main instruments developing intergovernmental cooperation, includes payments or aid in kind to developing countries in order to support their development process and find solutions for their emergent problems. Main aims of those activities are to bring recipient countries’ socio-economic infrastructure to a level that it can be sustained without any foreign aid, to establish and develop global cooperation. There are four main types of development assistance two of which are publicly funded and the other two are funded by private sector. The publicly funded ones are Official Development assistance and other official flows. The private flows are direct investments and aid activities of NGO’s. In this framework, ODA is composed of publicly funded grants or long-term, low-interest credits, 25 percent of which is granted by the central or local governments of the donor countries to the developing countries or to the international organizations in those countries with the aim of supporting economic development and increasing the level of welfare. Development cooperation and humanitarian aid activities of NGO’s are also included in the development assistance of the donor countries.<sup>77</sup>

Bilateral and multilateral assistance are two main Official Development Assistance categories. The bilateral aid includes project/program assistance, technical cooperation, food aid for development, support for national NGO’s, promotion of development aid, peace structuring activities, aids for asylum-seekers, emergency assistance and humanitarian aids, credits and administrative expenditures. On the

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<sup>76</sup> The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness retrieved in May 2013 from the site <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm> (accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

<sup>77</sup> Kalkınma Yardımlarına İlişkin Tanımlar ve Örnekli Açıklamalar, TİKA Raporlama ve Koordinasyon Birimi Ankara, Ekim 2010, p. 4

other hand, the multilateral aids are dues and contributions of the international organization.<sup>78</sup>

Turkey, which was a recipient country since the Marshall Plan in 1950's, has become a donor country after 1991. With the collapse of the SU, Turkey's bilateral aid activities have become a critical tool in Turkish foreign policy Union in Central Asia and Caucasia. For Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun, Turkey's current pro-active foreign aid policy has two main motivation points. The first one is to fulfill responsibilities in the international arena consistent with being a regional power. The second one is the requirement of new markets in this new developing world.<sup>79</sup> ODA contributing to the regional and global stability has become an important element of Turkish pro-active foreign policy and made Turkey a critical mediator in regional conflicts.<sup>80</sup>

Turkey works in cooperation with UN and OECD for a more effective ODA policy. In this framework, a joint "Aid Management Seminar" was held on 19-20<sup>th</sup> April 2012 by TİKA, UNDP and OECD Development Cooperation Directorate in Ankara to discuss new tendencies in international development cooperation. During the seminar, Turkey's potential membership to DAC was also discussed. UNDP's support for a more active aid transfer is based on Turkey's increasing donor role especially with TİKA's implementation of "Bridging Emerging Donor Roles and South-South Cooperation" project by 2008. Although Turkey is a founding member of OECD, she is still an observer in DAC. The Chairman of DAC, Brian Atwood, in

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<sup>78</sup> Kalkınma Yardımlarına İlişkin Tanımlar ve Örnekli Açıklamalar, TİKA Raporlama ve Koordinasyon Birimi Ankara, Ekim 2010, p. 6

<sup>79</sup> Kulaklıkaya M., Nurdun R., Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, pp. 131-132

<sup>80</sup> Turkey's Development Cooperation: General Characteristics and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Aspect, retrieved from [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa) (accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

his visit to Turkey on 20-22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012, offered membership to Turkey in OECD DAC which embraces 23 countries including the European Union members.<sup>81</sup>

In 2008, “Bridging South-South Cooperation and Emerging Donor Roles: Strengthen Turkey’s Participation in International Development Cooperation” Project was initiated by UNDP. The Project has been significant to make Turkey’s leadership in international arena more apparent.<sup>82</sup> The importance of the project for Turkey was described by UNDP as helping the Turkish government for the contribution to the achievement of MDGs in developing countries by sharing experiments.<sup>83</sup> This has been an important step for Turkey’s acceptance as a donor country in the world. As will be discussed in more detail below, in the framework of this project, TİKA continued its activities in Central Asia.

### **3.2. The Aim of the Establishment and the Structure of the Organization**

Following a general look on the development assistance in the world and the place of TİKA in this context, reasons for the establishment and the main structural characteristics of the institution will be examined.

TİKA was established in 1992 within the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to focus on the newly emerging post-Soviet republics. Being a development aid

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<sup>81</sup> Turkey is on the Way of OECD DAC Membership, *Newhorizons, UNDP Turkey Montly Newsletter*, Issues 77, May 2012, retrieved from <http://www.undp.org.tr/Gozlem2.aspx?WebSayfaNo=3861> (accessed on on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 )

<sup>82</sup>UNDP-TİKA Güney-Güney İşbirliği Programı Başladı, *Avrasya Bülteni*, No. 73, October/November 2008

<sup>83</sup> **Bridging South-South Cooperation And Emerging Donor Roles**, retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013 from <http://www.undp.org.tr/Gozlem2.aspx?WebSayfaNo=1439> (accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

agency, TİKA can be seen as a new soft power instrument of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>84</sup>

TİKA's main missions are contributions to the poverty reduction and the sustainable development in partner countries. It is the institution responsible for the implementation of Turkey's development cooperation policy. At the beginning of its establishment, TİKA's partner countries were post-Soviet Republics in Central Asia and Caucasia and the main aim was to assist those countries during their state building and economic transformation processes. Main activity of the institution is technical cooperation with partner countries for the institutional capacity and human resources development.<sup>85</sup>

TİKA was firstly established as a Directorate of Economic, Cultural, Educational and Technical Cooperation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to provide development assistance to Turkish speaking countries bordering Turkey and to develop cooperation with those countries by various projects in economic, technical, social, educational fields.<sup>86</sup>

According to the Chairman of TİKA, Serdar Çam, in the 1990's Turkey's primary policy towards newly emerging Central Asian Republics was their acceptance by the international community. Then, Turkey's objective was to develop the social, economic and cultural relations with those states. In time, Turkey's support was transformed into long-run projects and development-based assistance. An organization was needed to coordinate activities and foreign policy priorities of Turkey in the region. Thus, TİKA was established in accordance with the pro-active

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<sup>84</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe, M.T., Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 647-648

<sup>85</sup> Turkey's Development Cooperation: General Characteristics and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Aspect, retrieved from [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa) (accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

<sup>86</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe, M.T., Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 649

foreign policy and became an intermediary in the application of foreign policy in the region with which Turkey shares common values.<sup>87</sup>

TİKA became an organization working under the Prime Ministry with the adoption of “The Law on the Organization and Tasks of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Administration Directorate” (No. 4668) On May 28, 1999.<sup>88</sup> The year 2005 has been a turning point since the Prime Ministry issued the Circular No. 2005/11 by which this mission was passed to TİKA for a better, systematic analysis of development aids.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers decided on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011, the Statutory Decree/656 on “the Organization and Duties of the Directorate” which determines principles, procedures, duties, authorities and responsibilities of Agency. According to the first article of the statutory decree, TİKA is founded under the Prime Ministry and has its own legal entity, as well as special budget. The task of the agency is conducting economic, technical, commercial, cultural, educational, social, projects, and activities. Moreover, other duties of the institution are determined as organizing economic infrastructure tools, providing humanitarian assistance, and improving cooperation with countries in many fields by scholarships and training programs and conducting cultural cooperation programs.<sup>90</sup>

TİKA became responsible for the cooperation and coordination of projects among institutions as well as the inventory of foreign aids. With this transformation, Turkey’s Central Asian and Caucasian policies gained momentum. In fact, as regional conditions made Turkey’s policy-making process in the region difficult, a

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<sup>87</sup> Çam, S., Turkey’s Eternal Vision: The Motherland, TÜRKSOY Türk Dünyası Kültür ve Sanat Dergisi, No: 38, March 2012 pp. 32-35

<sup>88</sup> About TİKA, retrieved from <http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/about-us/1> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>89</sup> Kılıç, G., Turkey’s Foreign Aid Policy Towards Central Asia From A Comparative Perspective A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School Of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University 2011, pp. 54-55

<sup>90</sup> Statutory Decree 656 On The Organization and Duties of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency Directorate retrieved from <http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/about-us/legislation/organisation-law/20> (accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

need for an institutional structure collecting reliable data about the region and using this data by overseeing regional balances emerged. For this reason, the increasing role of TİKA in Turkish soft power policies was an important and appropriate step for Turkey to execute a stable and multi-dimensional foreign policy.<sup>91</sup>

TİKA consists of a president, the highest authority and three vice-presidents. There are eight directorates:

1. The Department of Central Asia and Caucasus Directorate,
2. The Department of Balkans and Eastern Europe Directorate,
3. The Department of the Middle East and Africa Directorate,
4. The Department of East and South Asia,
5. The Pacific and Latin America Directorate,
6. The Department of External Affairs and Partnerships Directorate,
7. The Legal Counsel, the Department of Strategy Development Directorate,
8. The Human Resources and Support Services Directorate.

Besides those units, the task of the directorate is also implemented by program coordination Offices abroad. Finally, the Advisory Council (which is a consulting committee) and working groups are other parts of the institutional structure.<sup>92</sup>

Main activity areas of those units are project and program assistance, technical cooperation, education, training, health, water and irrigation, the improvement of administrative and civil infrastructure, cultural cooperation, restoration, housing and agriculture.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Denizhan, E., Türkiye'nin Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Politikası ve TİKA, *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, Cilt 2, sayı 1, 2010 pp. 22-23

<sup>92</sup> Denizhan, E., Türkiye'nin Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Politikası ve TİKA, *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, Cilt 2, Sayı 1, 2010, pp. 22-23

<sup>93</sup> TİKA Faaliyet Alanları, retrieved from <http://www.tika.gov.tr/faaliyet-alanlari/2> (accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013)



### 3.3. Projects and Activities of the Institution in the Region

After giving main dynamics behind the establishment of TİKA and its structure, as well as main turning points for the structural transformation of TİKA, in this section, prominent activities, projects and assistances in the region will be discussed.

Main goals of Turkey's provision of development assistance to Central Asian countries can be stated as to contribute to the governmental structures in those states, to ensure political and economic stability in the area and to strengthen regional cooperation, to facilitate Central Asian countries' integration with the western world and the European-Atlantic institutions and to provide security in the transport of energy resources.<sup>94</sup> In this context, Turkey's development aid policy towards the region includes five main cooperation areas which are transportation, culture, education, economy and energy. TİKA was established in the line of those targets and Eximbank was founded for the provision of low interest rates for loans.<sup>95</sup>

TİKA's activities in the first decade after its establishment did not meet the expectations in the region. According to Özkan & Demirtepe, TİKA could not be successful to realize its task because of the political and economic instability in Turkey, as well as international developments in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Moreover, the fall of the Turkish Model in the Western world limited TİKA's effectiveness.<sup>96</sup> There was a lack of professionalism in terms of the functioning of the organization as well as its use of financial resources. TİKA was not ready in conceptual, professional and financial terms and was mainly directed by political priorities of Turkish politicians. In 1992, nearly one billion dollars of development

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<sup>94</sup> Kılıç, G., Turkey's Foreign Aid Policy Towards Central Asia From A Comparative Perspective A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, 2011, p. 44

<sup>95</sup> Kılıç, G., Turkey's Foreign Aid Policy Towards Central Asia From A Comparative Perspective A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University 2011, p. 54

<sup>96</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe, M.T., Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 648-650

assistance was given to Turkic States and the ratio of foreign aid (ODA) / Gross National Product was 0,78 percent; however, this amount could not be provided in the following years. Between 1992 and 1996, this amount was only 80.7 million dollars. By 1996, the ratio decreased to 0.10 percent. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that Turkey's development aid to Turkic States was challenged by those states' limited financial and organizational capabilities and Turkey's foreign aid was managed by people without any aid program experience. Moreover, foreign aid agreements were generally conducted with an emotional approach rather than a realistic one. Also, the role of TİKA was very small in this period because of the absence of professionalism and the limited budget of the institution.<sup>97</sup>

In analyzing TİKA's activities in 1990's, the economic conditions in Turkey in that period are also important. In 1990's both Turkey and the world witnessed critical developments and transformations. The Gulf War certainly had negative effects on Turkish economy. Then, there occurred the irrepressible increase in inflation after 5<sup>th</sup> April economic decisions in 1994. During the 1990's, Turkey was in a need of domestic borrowing due to the high budget deficits and financing gaps of local governments and social security institutions. The GDP per capita increased by 12 percent during the period between 1990 and 2000.<sup>98</sup>

An important event for this period had been the foundation of the OECD-TİKA Istanbul Private Sector Development Center in 1994 for training government officials of Central Asian countries in fields such as privatization, foreign investments and banking.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe, M.T., Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, p.651

<sup>98</sup> Toruk, İ. Türkiye'de 1990-2000 Yılları Arasında Sosyo-Ekonomik Ortamın ve Kültürel Hayatın Reklamlar Üzerinden Temsili, p. 500-502, retrieved from [http://www.sosyalbil.selcuk.edu.tr/sos\\_mak/makaleler/%C4%B0brahim%20TORUK/493-508.pdf](http://www.sosyalbil.selcuk.edu.tr/sos_mak/makaleler/%C4%B0brahim%20TORUK/493-508.pdf) (accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>99</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe,M.T, Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 654

Another point stressed by Kardaş and Erdağ was the perception in the region that Turkey involved in their domestic affairs, resulting in a fear of threat against their sovereignty. For instance, Uzbekistan recalled Uzbek students with the reason that they were in contact with the opposition members. In terms of Turkey's domestic politics, the period witnessed a lack of instability and planning, as well as lack of coordination among institutions which would be fulfilled by the increasing efficiency of TİKA in the following years when TİKA would become one of the Turkish foreign policy institutionalization and implementation tool and Turkey would begin to use a strategic dialogue with those countries by cultural and social projects.<sup>100</sup>

The registration of foreign aid only began in 1997 within the framework of the State Planning Organization. However, the aid auditing mission was transferred to the State Institute of Statistics for the period between 1997 and 2004. By 2005 this mission was passed to TİKA.<sup>101</sup> The first report was welcomed by OECD DAC. According to this report, Turkey's ODA was 339 million dollars, more than the amount required for DAC membership, 100 million dollars.<sup>102</sup> This was a critical step for the future of Turkey's ODA policy. As Smith states, reporting foreign aid significantly contributes to visibility, accountability and transparency. Moreover, it makes aids compatible with international standards.<sup>103</sup>

In the 2000's, domestic and international developments started to influence TİKA's position positively. With the single party government of AKP, foreign policy priorities were reconsidered and with the multi-dimensional approach in the Turkish

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<sup>100</sup> Kardaş, T., Erdağ R. (2012) Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA, *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, Cilt/Volume: 7, Sayı/Number: 1 pp. 177-178

<sup>101</sup> Kılıç, G., Turkey's Foreign Aid Policy Towards Central Asia From A Comparative Perspective A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School Of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University 2011, pp. 54-55

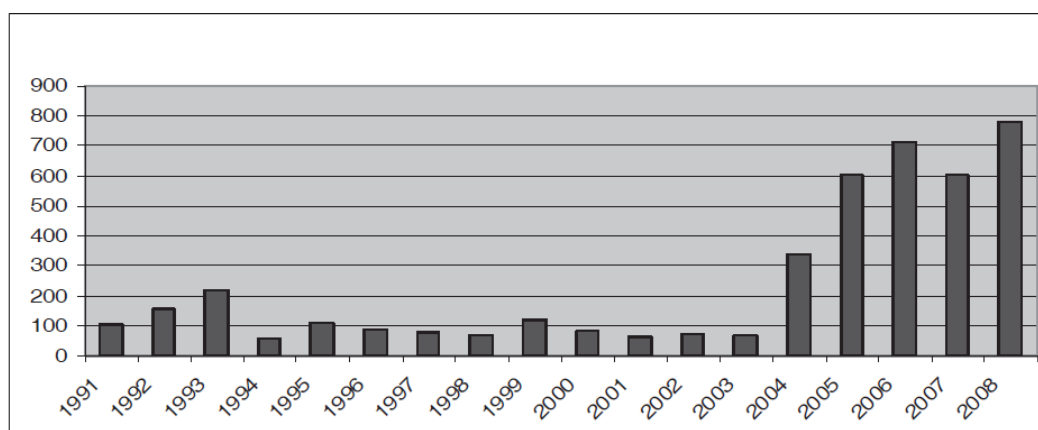
<sup>102</sup> Beşir Atalay "Takdim" in TİKA Development Assistance Report 2004 (TİKA, Ankara, 2005)

<sup>103</sup> Smith, K., Briefing Paper: Non-DAC Donors and Humanitarian Aid, Shifting Structures, Changing Trends, Government, July 2011, pp. 20.

foreign policy with new international dynamics after 11th September, TİKA could redefine its task and vision and reorganize its organizational structure.<sup>104</sup>

For Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun, Turkey has pursued a multi-dimensional, goal-oriented humanitarian foreign policy in 2000's with the aim of sustaining peace in its neighborhood and the world. The current aid policy of Turkey has there methodological principles which are vision orientation, systematic framework and soft power. As it is seen in the Table 1, when compared with the first decade, there is an upward trend in Turkey's ODA especially after 2004. This was a period of transformation for the institution, since the data collecting, recording and reporting tasks which had been carried out by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), were assigned by the Prime Ministry to TİKA in 2005.<sup>105</sup>

**Table 1: Turkey's ODA Since 1991, (Millions Dollars)<sup>106</sup>**



Source: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE2A>

<sup>104</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe, M.T., Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 648

<sup>105</sup> Kulaklıkaya M., Nurdun R., Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, pp. 136-138

<sup>106</sup> Kulaklıkaya M., Nurdun R., Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, pp. 135.

When the first establishment years of TİKA is compared with 2000's, there is an overall increase in amounts of ODA. This can be clearly seen in the Table 1. Especially there has been a significant change by 2005, indicating a structural transformation of TİKA.

With economic and political changes in Turkey after 2002 and the post-2004 era of relations with the European Union created a suitable atmosphere conducting development aids. With the new foreign policy of the AKP government, TİKA has had an important place and has become one of the essential elements of the multi-vector foreign policy of Turkey.<sup>107</sup>

During the interview conducted by the author, Rahman Nurdun stated that with transformations in the structure of TİKA the quality of activities has also improved. The political stability under the single party government has positively affected the process. TİKA's institutionalization has increased during this era. Moreover, economic growth has had positive impacts on budget of the institution. Currently, there are 35 coordination offices of TİKA in 33 countries. This transformation has brought in a new vision; interaction with NGO's and cooperation with international organizations has intensified.<sup>108</sup>

Besides the amount of ODA, the number of TİKA's activities per year amounted to 1452 by 2006 with a 158 percent increase when compared with 2005. While TİKA realized 2346 projects between 1992 and 2002, the number was 2800 for years between 2003 and 2006 which was the period of development for the institution. In other words, during its development period, TİKA's annual projects and activities was three times more than the first decade after its establishment. This shows that Turkey by that period is not a recipient but a donor country.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe, M.T, Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 655-656

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Rahman Nurdun, Advisor of the President of TİKA Serdar Çam, on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

<sup>109</sup> Kardaş, T., Erdağ R. (2012) Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA, *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, Cilt/Volume: 7, Sayı/Number: 1 p. 171

Between 2005 and 2009, Turkey had been the non-DAC donor with the highest amount of ODA which was 1,8 billion dollars in 2005; 2,2 billion dollars in 2006 and 2007; 2,7 billion dollars in 2008 and 2,5 billion dollars in 2009. In 2010, Turkey was the second non-DAC donors with the highest foreign aid. In terms of humanitarian aid, Turkey has been in top ten lists of non-DAC donors between 2000 and 2010, except 2001 and 2003.<sup>110</sup> Finally in 2011, Turkey's ODA reached 1,320 million dollars (0,17 percent of Turkey's national income) with an increase of 38,2 percent when compared with 2010 in which Turkey's ODA was 967 million dollars. this was the highest escalation among donor countries for that year.<sup>111</sup>

As Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ announced, Turkey's total development assistance amounted to nearly 2,3 billion dollars in 2011. Government representatives continue to highlight that while Turkey's development assistance figures grew, OECD donors' contributions diminished because of the global economic crisis. That development is important for Turkey being a country that was a recipient country for a long time.<sup>112</sup> On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that according to OECD reports, Turkey's foreign aid amounted to nearly 2,5 billion dollars in 2012 and added that the strength of a country can be measured with its contributions to education, culture, also with its intervention in injustice and inequalities.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Smith, K., Briefing Paper: Non-DAC Donors and Humanitarian Aid, Shifting Structures, Changing Trends, Government, July 2011, pp. 6-7.

<sup>111</sup> Kendirci, B., Üçkuş, Ö., Teoriden Uygulamaya Dış Yardım, *Sayıştay Dergisi*, No. 86, July-September 2012, p. 62.

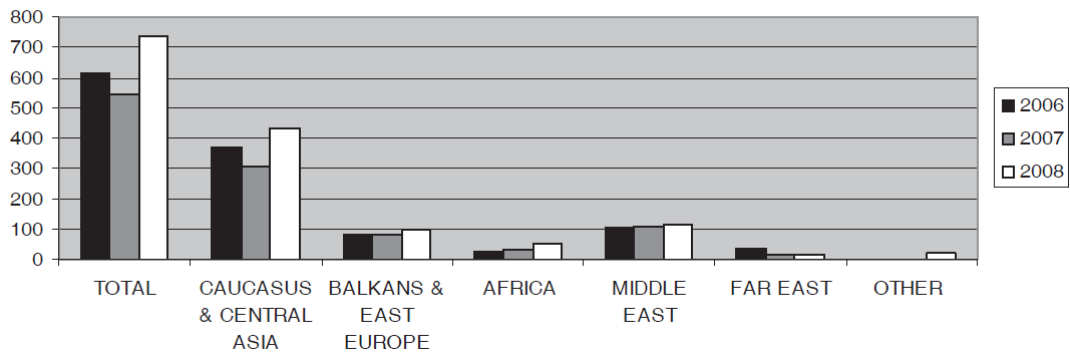
<sup>112</sup> Kardaş, Ş., Turkey's Development Assistance Policy: How to Make Sense of the New Guy on the Block, Today's Zaman, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2013, retrieved from the site <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-306136-turkeys-development-assistance-policy-how-to-make-sense-of-the-new-guy-on-the-block.html> (accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2013)

<sup>113</sup> Turkey-Funded Foreign Aid Increased 99 Percent, says Prime Minister, *Anatolia News Agency*, Ankara, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013, retrieved from the site <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-funded-foreign-aid-increased-99-percent-says-prime-minister-.aspx?pageID=238&nid=44874> (Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

When we shift to the region from the general picture, the main focus of TİKA's development aids has been the Turkic states. Between 2004 and 2006, nearly two thirds of projects and activities of TİKA were provided to Central Asia and Caucasus for their socio-economic infrastructure, communication, production sectors and humanitarian aid. Furthermore, education and health sectors of those countries were perceived by TİKA as vital.<sup>114</sup> The majority of Turkey's ODA, 445,5 million dollars was provided to Caucasus and Central Asia between 2006 and 2008.<sup>115</sup>

The priority given by TİKA to the region can be clearly seen in Table 2 in which Caucasus and Central Asia are two regions receiving the highest amount of ODA from Turkey between 2006 and 2008.

**Table 2: Regional Distribution of Turkey's ODA between 2006 and 2008 (million dollars)<sup>116</sup>**



According to Nurdun, when we look at the region, countries show different characteristics. For instance, Kazakhstan is an economically developed country and

<sup>114</sup> Özkan, G., Demirtepe, M.T, Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 656

<sup>115</sup> Kulaklıkaya M., Nurdun R., Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, p. 143.

<sup>116</sup> Kulaklıkaya M., Nurdun R., Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, p. 144

instead of the provision of development assistance, the capacity building supports that TİKA provides are much more demanded. This is also the case in Turkmenistan. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are economically less developed countries requiring development assistance. Although, Turkey's political relations with Uzbekistan have been stagnant because of this country's domestic politics and the attitude of President Islam Karimov, TİKA is active in this country too especially in terms of training and equipment provision projects.<sup>117</sup>

As it is seen in Table 3, the total ODA from Turkey to Central Asia has increased to 154,37 million dollars in 2011 from 91,77 million dollars in 2004. The highest amount of ODA was provided to the region in 2006. Kyrgyzstan has been the country receiving the highest amount of ODA from Turkey in the region.

**Table 3: Turkey's Bilateral ODA in Central Asia between 2004 and 2011**<sup>118</sup>

(Million Dollars)	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>	33,82	55,56	113,14	69,56	53	67,72	83,82	74	<b>550,62</b>
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	27,17	44,5	45,34	42,81	61,56	62,53	54,12	53,32	<b>391,35</b>
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	18,82	13,08	17,73	19,84	11,25	12,68	17,39	13,56	<b>124,35</b>
<b>UZBEKSTAN</b>	5,48	3,33	3,79	7,25	7,25	8,84	15,44	6,56	<b>54,15</b>
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>	6,48	3,2	5,94	6,9	6,25	5,35	5,81	6,93	<b>46,86</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91,77</b>	<b>119,67</b>	<b>182,15</b>	<b>146,36</b>	<b>139,31</b>	<b>157,12</b>	<b>176,58</b>	<b>154,37</b>	<b>1167,3</b>

According to Table 4, in 2004, Central Asian countries were among the most important recipient countries. In the period between 2004 and 2011, each year all or

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Rahman Nurdun, Advisor of the President of TİKA Serdar Çam, on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

<sup>118</sup> Arranged from TİKA's Development Assistance Reports 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011



some of the regional countries have been among recipient countries having the highest amounts of Turkey's ODA.<sup>119</sup>

**Table 4: Central Asian Countries among the Receiving the Highest Amount of Foreign Aid from Turkey<sup>120</sup>**

<b>2011</b>	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan
<b>2010</b>	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
<b>2009</b>	Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan
<b>2008</b>	Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan
<b>2007</b>	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan
<b>2006</b>	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan
<b>2005</b>	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan
<b>2004</b>	Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

TİKA's projects and activities are implemented generally through coordination offices established in each recipient country. The first coordination office of TİKA was opened in Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1993. According to the establishment agreement signed on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1993, the coordination office was granted corps-diplomatic status. The Ashgabat Coordination Office defines TİKA's task as providing technical assistance to developing countries in economic, commercial, social, cultural and educational fields while supporting their growth targets by developing their human resources and institutional capacities. Furthermore, TİKA respects developing countries' national values, social and cultural characteristics. In last ten years, nearly 111 projects and activities were held

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<sup>119</sup> Arranged from TİKA's Development Assistance Reports 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

<sup>120</sup> Arranged from TİKA's Development Assistance Reports 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

in Turkmenistan with the aim of improving social, economic infrastructures and production sector. Those projects and activities have been mainly on administrative and civil infrastructures, communication, business services, health, finance, water, water hygiene and restoration works. With the new foreign policy approach of Turkey, the budget and the number of TİKA's projects in Turkmenistan have increased.<sup>121</sup>

There is a positive attitude to TİKA in the country. The fact that the corps-diplomatic status was only granted to TİKA while there are also other countries' development assistance institutions as Japan International Cooperation Agency and Development Aid (JICA), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Turkmenistan. Some of the important projects which have recently come into prominence are on cooperating in tourism, supporting the implementation of e-state and training cooperation projects.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, in 2011, TİKA's poultry husbandry project in Turkmenistan was selected as the best implementation example by UNDP's Special Unit for South-South Cooperation which includes the presentation of technical cooperation and development activities in under-developed or developing countries.<sup>123</sup>

Projects and activities in Kazakhstan began in 1992 and Almaty Coordination Office was opened in 1995, latter was moved to Astana in 2008. The official opening ceremony of the Astana Coordination Office was held in 2009 with the participation of Minister of State Faruk Çelik.<sup>124</sup> In field of education, an important project realized in Kazakhstan has been the establishment of the Kazak-Türk high school for Ahıska Turks. The project had been firstly mentioned during Turkish Prime Minister

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<sup>121</sup> According to data from TİKA's Ashgabat Coordination Office, retrieved by e-mail

<sup>122</sup> According to data from TİKA's Ashgabat Coordination Office, retrieved by e-mail

<sup>123</sup> UNDP, Türkmenistan Tavukçuluk Projesi'ni "En İyi Uygulama Örnekleri'nden Birisi Seçti", *Avrasya Bülteni*, No. 99, March 2011, p.13

<sup>124</sup> Devlet Bakanı Faruk Çelik Kazakistan'da, *Avrasya Bülteni*, No. 82, August 2009, p. 5

Erdoğan's visit to Kazakhstan in 2005.<sup>125</sup> The school with a capacity of 280 students was opened in October 2011.<sup>126</sup>

TİKA's presence in Uzbekistan started in 1992 and the Tashkent Coordination Office was opened in 1995. During the visit of the former president of TİKA Hakan Fidan to Uzbekistan, a cooperation protocol was signed between the two governments on 4th November 2004. During the visit, Fidan stated that although many projects on agriculture, economy, training and tourism had been already realized before this protocol, the main target was to determine main requirements and sharing experiences to get efficient results from the projects.<sup>127</sup>

Kyrgyzstan is the country receiving the highest amounts Turkey's ODA in the last decade, 550 million dollars.<sup>128</sup> According to TİKA's Bishkek Coordination Office, the total amount of foreign aid to Kyrgyzstan between 1992 and 2012 has exceeded 40 million dollars. This includes projects and activities in economic, commercial, technique, social and cultural cooperation areas. Main projects in the country have been on training for capacity building, conferences, seminars, provision of equipment, Turkology, the establishment of TİKA Turkish Cultural Center and health.<sup>129</sup> TİKA's total foreign aid to Kyrgyzstan between 1992 and 2012 has significantly increased by 2005 as it can be seen in the Table 5.

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<sup>125</sup> Türkiye Kazakistan İlişkilerinde Önemli Atılımlar, *Avrasya Bülteni*, Sayı 84, October 2009, p. 14

<sup>126</sup> TİKA'dan Kazakistan'a Dev Yatırım, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2011, retrieved from <http://www.tika.gov.tr/haber/tikadan-kazakistan-dev-yatirim-kazak-turk-lisesi/95> (accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

<sup>127</sup> TİKA Başkanı'nın Özbekistan Ziyareti, *Avrasya Bülteni*, No.29, December 2004, p. 8

<sup>128</sup> See Table 4

<sup>129</sup> According to data from TİKA's Bishkek Coordination Office, retrieved by e-mail.

**Table 5: TİKA's Foreign Aid to Kyrgyzstan between 1992 and 2012<sup>130</sup>**

<b>YEARS</b>	<b>FOREIGN AID (Dollars)</b>
1992	755.324
1993	432.515
1994	1.351.246
1995	1.379.359
1996	776.358
1997	540.768
1998	4.162.040
1999	650.308
2000	477.489
2001	632.666
2002	459.852
2003	431.245
2004	555.283
2005	758.183
2006	1.415.929
2007	1.351.534
2008	1.695.440
2009	1.418.311
2010	1.525.228
2011	9.518.395
2012	9.982.052
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40.269.529</b>

The apparent increase in the amount of projects and activities of TİKA in Kyrgyzstan especially after 2005 is directly related with important steps which had been taken in terms of institutionalization. Some of the prominent activities have been the provision of technical assistance to Kyrgyz Comptroller in 2009.<sup>131</sup> In terms of assistance in health sector, the first bone marrow transplant center of the Central Asia, Kyrgyz-Turk Bone Marrow Transplant Center, was opened in Kyrgyzstan by

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<sup>130</sup> Gürbüz Y. E., "Demokrasi ve Otoriterlik Sarkacında: Kırgızistan" in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 2012, Ankara, p. 211

<sup>131</sup> Kırgızistan Sayıştay'ına Teknik Yardım, *Avrasya Bülteni*, Sayı 84, October 2009, p. 10

TİKA in 2006.<sup>132</sup> In 2011, technical assistance and training was provided for 2500 Kyrgyz citizens and the construction of a vocational high school with a capacity of 850 students and a hospital in Osh was started.<sup>133</sup>

Projects on education have been apparent in TİKA's Kyrgyzstan activities. 42 percent of its activities included the training of experts and the 19 percent constituted the improvement of education. However, according to Gürbüz's interviews in the country, there is a lack of publicity for TİKA's activities. For instance, Kyrgyz people know Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); however the same cannot be said for TİKA. Kyrgyz officials stated that the frequent change of TİKA coordinators preclude the continuity of relations by adding that between 2010 and 2011 TİKA coordinator in Bishkek changed three times.<sup>134</sup>

Turkey's development cooperation activities in Tajikistan, the other fragile country in the region, had begun in 1992. Between 1992 and 2011, Turkey's ODA to Tajikistan was 55 million dollars; 14 million dollars of which was realized by TİKA. Moreover, Turkey has been one of the top ten countries providing the highest amounts of ODA to Tajikistan between 2006 and 2010. TİKA Dushanbe Coordination Office was opened in 1995. However, between 1996 and 2000, the office paused its activities. Main activities of TİKA in the country have been on education, health, unemployment, improvement of institutional capacity.<sup>135</sup>

Although, Turkey's ODA in Tajikistan witnessed a decrease in 2009, the amount has increased by 2010. However, when compared with other institutions' ODA, TİKA's amount of ODA remains lower in this country. This can be seen in Table 6.

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<sup>132</sup> Orta Asya'nın İlk Kemik İliği Nakli Merkezi Kırgızistan'da Açıldı, *Avrasya Bülteni*, Sayı 50, September 2006

<sup>133</sup> According to data from TİKA's Bishkek Coordination Office, retrieved by e-mail

<sup>134</sup> Gürbüz Y. E., *Demokrasi ve Otoriterlik Sarkacında: Kırgızistan* in Aydınğün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 2012, Ankara, p. 211

<sup>135</sup> According to data from TİKA's Dushanbe Coordination Office, retrieved by e-mail.

**Table 6: Turkey's ODA to Tajikistan**<sup>136</sup>

Years	Official Development Assistance (Dollars)		
	TİKA	Other Institutions	Total ODA
1992–2006	5.200.000	19.810.000	25.010.000
2007	1.200.000	5.700.000	6.900.000
2008	1.790.000		5.480.000
2009	810.000		5.341.000
2010	1.600.000		5.353.000
2011	2.537.000		6.932.000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13.137.000</b>	<b>41.879.000</b>	<b>55.016.000</b>

There are other important projects of TİKA in the region. As part of the Turkology Project<sup>137</sup> which was started in 2000, 31 projects were realized by 2006. This is not only a cultural event since with this project; many students could find better jobs in Turkish companies in those countries.<sup>138</sup>

In the region, TİKA's presence is apparent. There are other countries' development organizations as well, but those organizations deal only with large scale projects and they have business concerns. TİKA, different than other countries' development institutions, is also flexible enough to respond to the immediate demands of the region. TİKA's projects are demand oriented. Flexibility, coordination with other institutions and international organizations and human oriented projects have made TİKA successful in the region. The leading projects in the region are generally capacity building projects. The focus is on institutional improvements with

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<sup>136</sup> According to data from TİKA's Dushanbe Coordination Office, retrieved by e-mail.

<sup>137</sup> More information on this project will be given below.

<sup>138</sup> Demirtepe, M.T., Özkan, G., Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting, *Turkish Studies*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 659

institutional capacity building projects. Moreover, there is an increase in the intensity of activities in the region.<sup>139</sup>

Another important activity of TİKA aims the protection of Turkic cultural heritage: restorations of the mausoleum in Kazakhstan and Turkish monuments in Mongolia.<sup>140</sup> In addition to such activities, Ahıska Turks' associations which have close relations with Turkey's official institutions, realize important projects in cooperation with TİKA. TİKA focuses on the economic and social problems of Ahıska Turks and contributes to their solutions. For instance, in order to solve the problem of education, protocols on projects of Ahıska Turks Primary School, a high school building with a capacity of 500 students and a dormitory with a capacity of 300 students were signed.<sup>141</sup> Although supporting directly Ahıska Turks is not among its missions, TİKA provides Turkish books, newspapers and other printed materials to the community and organizations of Ahıska Turks, but generally in a covert way.<sup>142</sup>

To conclude, the establishment of the institution meant the institutionalization of Turkey's ODA policy and activities. With this is important institutionalization step, Turkey's presence in the region has become more visible.

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<sup>139</sup> Interview with Rahman Nurdun Advisor of the President of TİKA Serdar Çam, on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

<sup>140</sup> Çam, S., Turkey's Eternal Vision: The Motherland, TÜRKSOY Türk Dünyası Kültür ve Sanat Dergisi, No: 38, March 2012 pp. 35

<sup>141</sup> Aydıngün A., Tüfekçioğlu, H., Avrasya'nın Merkezinde Dünyaya Açılan Ülke: Kazakistan", in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 2012, Ankara, p. 122

<sup>142</sup> Oh, C.J., Role of Homeland in Preserving Diaspora Identity: The Case of Korea and Turkey's Engagements with the Korean and Ahıska Turkish Diasporas in Central Asia, OAKA USAK, 2007, Cilt: 2, Sayı: 4, pp.156-172

## **PRESIDENCY OF TURKS ABROAD AND RELATED COMMUNITIES & THE YUNUS EMRE INSTITUTE**

The second part of this chapter analyzes two main institutional bodies that aim to reach to those groups that Turkey has linguistic, historical and cultural ties and to implement cultural and educational projects in many parts of the world including Central Asia. One of these institutions is the YTATB which can be seen as the diaspora institution of Turkey.<sup>143</sup> The second one is the Yunus Emre Institute which implements the Turkology Project in 33 countries. Those institutions are examples of the institutionalization process in 2000's and are vital in terms of using soft power, especially cultural diplomacy in foreign relations. In this part of the chapter, first the concept of diaspora is briefly reviewed and then the aim of establishment and structures of the institutions as well as some main institutional activities including the Turkology Project will be analyzed.

### **3.4. Diaspora Politics and Institutions in General**

Since YTATB has been established as a diaspora institution, this section also stresses on the definition of the concept of diaspora, its historical background, the classification of the concept in the literature, diaspora institutions and politics, and the approach of Turkey to the concept.

The definition of the diaspora and main principles of the concept is traced back to Sheffer who defines the term ethno-national diaspora as follows:

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<sup>143</sup> In this thesis, the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities will be labeled as YTATB, although this is not the official abbreviation. So far the institution did not adopt such an official abbreviation.



an ethno-national diaspora is a social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries.<sup>144</sup>

There are many features affecting the presence of diaspora. Characteristics of diaspora are mainly influenced by causes of migration, cross-border experiences of homeland with destination and the integration of minorities or immigrants into the host country.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, boundaries between the host country and ethno-national diaspora are generally drawn by cultural and social dimensions.<sup>146</sup> Diaspora members try to protect their ethno-national identities and interactions with their homeland as well as other communities of same ethnic origin.<sup>147</sup>

For Tsagarousianou, there are four main features that needs to be used in the definition of the term diaspora: the reason of migration (voluntarily migration as a result of aggression), sufficient time period, the recognition of positive features of diaspora, and the awareness of communities of diaspora in terms of sharing common identity and values with members of the same ethnic communities in other host countries.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Sheffer, G., *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 9-10

<sup>145</sup> Faist, T., *Diaspora and Transnationalism: What Kind of Dance Partners*, in Bauböck, R., Faist, T. (eds), *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, *IMISCOE Research*, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, p. 12

<sup>146</sup> Sheffer, G., *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 11

<sup>147</sup> Sheffer, G., *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 26

<sup>148</sup> Tsagarousianou, R., *Rethinking the Concept of Diaspora: Mobility, Connectivity and Communication in a Globalised World*, *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, London, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 54

In terms of the historical background of the concept of diaspora, originally, the diaspora term was used to refer to the historic experiences of specific groups just as Jews and Armenians. Then the term began to be used for religious minorities in Europe. After the 1970's a significant increase in the use of the term was observed.<sup>149</sup> Irrespective of their democratic level, until late 20<sup>th</sup> century, many host societies and governments ignored ethno-national diaspora groups by seeking to lessen their cultural, social, economic and political presence and significance. Moreover, some of those host countries and societies imposed social and political pressures on immigrants who settled permanently in those countries, generally with the aim of assimilation. Some homeland countries such as Turkey and Greece have seen members of their diaspora communities as their devoted agents in host countries.<sup>150</sup>

In literature the diaspora concept has been classified according to different dynamics. For Sheffer, there are two meaningful criteria for classifying diaspora. The first one is the states of their homeland. The second one is age. For the former, there are two types of diasporas: stateless diaspora and state-linked diasporas. Stateless diasporas are those who are unable to establish their own independent states. Whereas, state-linked diasporas are connected to society of their own ethnic origin constituting majority in an established states. In terms of the age factor, diasporas are classified in three such as historical diaspora, modern diaspora, and incipient diaspora.<sup>151</sup>

After giving main features and the historical background of the diaspora concept, it should be stated that related countries generally develop a diaspora politics and establish a diaspora institutions to implement this policy. For example, for Lahneman, there are some main tools of diaspora politics. A diaspora tries to affect governmental policies of both the home country and the hosting country; home and hosting country governments seek to use diaspora resources for their own purposes;

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<sup>149</sup> Sheffer, G., *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 9-10

<sup>150</sup> Sheffer, G., *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p.1

<sup>151</sup> Sheffer, G., *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 73-75

diaspora supports rebel movements which also exploit diasporas and criminal activity; ethnically based criminal networks uses diasporas and the desired outcomes are reached by diasporic civic associations.<sup>152</sup>

In addition to these political tools, there are many institutions established with the objective of serving and engaging diaspora communities and kins abroad. Those are called Diaspora Ministries and they try to expand the influence of the state by the diaspora, using soft power tools.<sup>153</sup> Those diaspora organizations function on five different levels: the domestic level in the hosting country, the regional level, the trans-state level, the level of the entire diaspora and the level of homeland politics.<sup>154</sup>

In fact, the diaspora institutions have become more widespread especially after the 1980's. Some of those were established with the aim of supporting the foreign policy of the country. Some others are established to solve diaspora problems. In fact, diaspora is an actor in foreign policy; however, it may have a negative impact if it is not given sufficient importance. States' attitude towards their citizens determine the impact of diaspora in foreign policy.<sup>155</sup>

Finally, when we look at the discussion of the concept of diaspora in Turkey, it may be suggested that in both theory and practice, Turkey's approach to diaspora politics is different from classical diaspora approach. By pursuing a pro-active foreign policy and seeking to increase its position in the international arena, Turkey has developed a new discourse regarding the Turkish communities living abroad.

In Turkish language, the term diaspora has been used to describe foreigners living in Turkey and the Turkish diaspora is perceived as people in Europe, Central Asia and

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<sup>152</sup> Lahneman, W. J., Impact of Diaspora Communities on National and Global Politics, Report on Survey of the Literature, *Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland*, 2005, p. 9

<sup>153</sup> Yurtnaç, K., Turkey's New Horizon: Turks Abroad and Related Communities, SAM (Center for Strategic Research Papers), No. 2, October 2012, p. 3

<sup>154</sup> Sheffer, G., *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 173

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Mehmet Köse Deputy Chairman of the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

Balkans. In most cases, however, Turkish politicians have usually utilized the term “Related Communities”.<sup>156</sup>

In 2012, the deputy Prime Minister and State Minister responsible for the Presidency Bekir Bozdağ has stated that Turkey is now a strong state and will stand to, work for and support its citizens and relatives. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities is the Turkey’s Ministry of Diaspora.<sup>157</sup>

In terms of diaspora, the deputy Chairman of the Presidency, Mehmet Köse, stated that the presidency can be seen as an institution established with the intention of designing diaspora politics. In terms of diaspora politics, this is not only a tool for foreign policy but a constitutional principle. The 62<sup>nd</sup> article of the constitution, give to the state the task about responsibilities towards its citizens living abroad.

In this context, the Presidency aims to reach every citizen and every association abroad on the base of the citizenship ties. Citizen centered approach will serve to isolate ideological obsessions against Turkey. Also diaspora means qualified human power and Turkey carries out activities in order to benefit from this. However, the basis in Turkey’s diaspora politics is citizen centered approach. Citizens in Central Asia for instance are not seen as sources of benefit.<sup>158</sup>

Although YTATB is said to be established as a diaspora institution, its task is not limited with citizens living abroad. The institution also aims to reach the related communities. Even though in which regions the institution pursues a diaspora politics specifically is not yet very clear, it may be assumed that the Central Asian Republics are perceived as related communities rather than diaspora by YTATB.

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<sup>156</sup> Akçay, E., Alimukhamedov, F., Reevaluating Contemporary “Diaspora Policy” of Turkey, *Süleyman Demiral Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2013, p. 107

<sup>157</sup> Akçay, E., Alimukhamedov, F., Reevaluating Contemporary “Diaspora Policy” of Turkey, *Süleyman Demiral Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2013, p. 104

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Mehmet Köse Deputy Chairman of the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

### 3.5. The Aim of Establishment and the Structure of Institutions

There has been a critical transformation in Turkish foreign policy with globalization, the increasing interaction and transportation facilities. A more democratic policy including many actors such as NGO's has begun to be applied. Public diplomacy has gained importance and activities of cultural centers have become critical in the world. In Turkey, TİKA, YTATB and the Yunus Emre Institute are institutions established as a result of this trend.<sup>159</sup>

With the pro-active foreign policy in Turkey, the awareness of the presence of citizens and kin communities abroad has raised. This includes both migrated citizens, and other relative communities with whom Turkey has ethnic, religious and cultural ties. With those dynamics, there occurred a need for an institutional mechanism to conduct relations with citizens living abroad and kin communities.<sup>160</sup>

The presidency was established as a public institution under the Prime Ministry according to a law which was adopted on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 with the aim of planning activities and providing support for the implementation and inspection of those activities towards Turks and relative communities abroad.<sup>161</sup>

The presidency has three main areas of task. The first one is 'citizens', the second one is 'communities that we have historical and cultural bonds', the third one is 'international scholars'. The Presidency is an important example of institutionalism and coordination. There are three main consultation boards: Overseas Citizens Advisory Board, Evaluation Board for the Coordination of Cultural and Social

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<sup>159</sup>Interview with Mehmet Köse Deputy Chairman of the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

<sup>160</sup> Yurtnaç, K., Turkey's New Horizon: Turks Abroad and Related Communities, SAM (Center for Strategic Research) Papers, No. 2, October 2012, p. 4

<sup>161</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H. (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri, ", in Aydınğün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 2012, Ankara, pp. 556

Relations and International Students Evaluation Board. Those boards are responsible for the general decisions which are implemented by departments. In Turkey there are nearly 30 institutions dealing with citizens abroad. They constitute a mechanism of coordination and cooperation among those institutions. The main aim is not developing bilateral relations but supporting cultural closeness, unveiling social similarities, and lessening differences among relative communities. In this way, the Presidency serves as a tool of public/cultural diplomacy.<sup>162</sup>

The institution works in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TİKA, The Council of Higher Education (YÖK), the Yunus Emre Institute and the Public Diplomacy Office.<sup>163</sup>The Yunus Emre Institute was firstly established as a foundation in 2007 and then became an institute within the Yunus Emre Foundation with the goal of promoting the Turkish culture, building Turkish Cultural Centers in different countries in the world and carrying out activities of those centers.<sup>164</sup> To conduct research for a better promotion of Turkish history, language and literature, supporting scientific studies through cooperation with different institutions and publicizing works on this issue are main tasks of the Institute. The Institute carries out its task via cultural centers abroad.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Interview with Mehmet Köse Deputy Chairman of the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

<sup>163</sup> Yurtnaç, K., Turkey's New Horizon: Turks Abroad and Related Communities, SAM (Center for Strategic Research) Paper, No. 2, October 2012, p. 6

<sup>164</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H. (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri, in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 2012, Ankara, pp. 557

<sup>165</sup> The Yunus Emre Foundation Regulation, No. 5653, retrieved from <http://yee.org.tr/turkiye/tr/kurumsal/vakif-kanunu> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

### 3.6. Main Activities in the Region

Besides citizens, there is another dimension of the diaspora politics; kin and relatives. Relations with those communities mainly aim to deepen cultural relations within the context of public diplomacy. Activities mainly include the protection of culture, language, religion, supporting Turkish education, to conduct case studies aiming to increase the awareness and publicity of the area.<sup>166</sup>

When compared with 1990's, current projects have micro level targets (as minorities or ethnic groups in the region) instead of macro level projects (including the whole region). Activities of the YTATB focus predominantly on graduate studies, scholarship, capacity building, cooperation with NGO's; media support projects and specific activities for Ahıska Turks.<sup>167</sup>

The Presidency focuses on four main areas: overseas citizens, kin and relative communities, international students and NGO's. In terms of relations with kin and related communities, the Presidency is responsible to coordinate services provided to them while confirming the effectiveness and productivity of activities. One of the main priorities of the Presidency is to support the economic, social and cultural power, as well as the cultural identity building processes of kin and related communities living in different regions including Central Asia (which exceed 200 million people). The Presidency also aims to increase scientific, social and cultural cooperation with those communities. In terms of international students, the Presidency targets to help international students by providing them scholarship, medical service, tuition and accommodations.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Interviews realized in the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

<sup>167</sup> Interviews realized in the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

<sup>168</sup> Yurtnaç, K., Turkey's New Horizon: Turks Abroad and Related Communities, SAM (Center for Strategic Research) Papers, No. 2, October 2012, p. 6-9

According to the Deputy Prime Minister Bozdağ, the Presidency has reached a point that the diplomacy could not, by targeting directly “people” and aiming the protection of everyone who has bonds with Turkey. He added that Turkey should develop policies to prevent discrimination in politics, education and law which Turkic people are faced with. He also stressed on the humanitarian dialogue apart from the traditional diplomacy.<sup>169</sup>

In November 2012, the Chairman of the Presidency Kemal Yurtnaç paid a visit to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In Uzbekistan, he visited Hoca Ahmet University in Turkestan and the Tashkent Primary School, and then met with Turkic NGO’s. In Kyrgyzstan, he contacted Turkic NGO’s. During the visit, he stated that there has to be a mutual effort for cooperation in all fields in order to develop effective cooperation and dialogue with the region that Turkey has historical and cultural ties.<sup>170</sup>

The Institute has begun its activities in 2008. In Astana, there is a cultural center serving cultural and Turkish education activities.<sup>171</sup> Other cultural centers in Central Asia are in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

One of the main projects of the institution is the Turkology Project which was transferred to the Institute from TİKA with a protocol signed on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011.<sup>172</sup> The aim of the Turkology Project is to deepen Turkey’s friendship with other countries in order to increase cultural exchange, to serve for students wishing

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<sup>169</sup> Bizim İçin Önce İnsan Gelir, Interview with Bekir Bozdağ in *Artı 90 Dergisi*, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, No. 1, January 2012, pp. 4-5

<sup>170</sup> Orta Asya Çalışma Ziyareti, retrieved from <http://www.ytb.gov.tr/index.php/2012etkinlikleri/833-2012111501-2.html> (accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

<sup>171</sup> Durmuş, M., Yılmaz, H. (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye’nin Orta Asya’ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri, in Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 2012, Ankara p. 557

<sup>172</sup> TİKA ile Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Arasında Türkoloji Projesinin Devrine İlişkin Protokol İmzalandı, retrieved from TİKA’s official website <http://www.tika.gov.tr/haber/tika-ile-yunus-emre-enstitusu-arasinda-turkoloji-projesinin-devrine-iliskin-protokol-imzalandi/39> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013)



to have education on the fields of Turkish language, literature, culture and art. The Institute also employs research assistants for Turkology departments abroad.<sup>173</sup>

To conclude, it is possible to suggest that with the pro-active approach in foreign policy, Turkey has begun to use soft power tools as public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, development aid and humanitarian assistance. In this framework projects could be realize for the relative communities in Central Asia.<sup>174</sup> It is apparent that the Presidency and the Institute focus on the improvement of common historical and cultural ties with kins.

Activities of both institutions are vital for the continuation of cultural ties among Turkic people and the recognition of the Turkish language, culture and art in the world. Their activities provide a cultural diplomacy tool and contribute to Turkey's relations with the Turkic States.

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<sup>173</sup> Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Türkoloji Projesi, retrieved from <http://yee.org.tr/turkiye/tr/turkoloji> (accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>174</sup> Bizim İçin Önce İnsan Gelir, Interview with Bekir Bozdağ in *Artı 90 Dergisi*, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, No. 1, January 2012, p. 3

## CHAPTER IV

### PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC SPEAKING COUNTRIES

#### (TÜRKPA)

The first part of the chapter analyzes the structure, the aim of establishment, activities of TÜRKPA and its influence on Turkey's relations with member countries and policy towards the region. Since parliamentary assemblies in international organizations and inter-parliamentary friendship groups have become an important tool in international relations, firstly a general look at the parliamentary diplomacy is given with a specific emphasis on soft power. Recently, parliaments' involvement in foreign affairs has been significantly increased. Beyond discussing foreign policy issues in plenary sessions, parliamentary delegations have begun play a role in parliamentary assemblies of international organizations. This discussion will be followed by an analysis of establishment and the structure of the organization. Then, main activities of the organization will be examined. Finally, the importance of the organization in terms of strengthening the relations with the regional Turkic countries and Turkey's presence in the region will be discussed.

#### 4.1. Parliamentary Diplomacy

The use of soft power has been one of the major aims of the governments in foreign policy making since 2000s. According to Joseph Nye, soft power can be defined as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments.”<sup>175</sup> In terms of soft power, Kalın states “This is possible through

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<sup>175</sup> Öniş, Z., Yılmaz, Ş. (2009). Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 10, No.1, Routledge, p.17

persuading the other party, through convincing arguments and rational policies. Here credibility and the ability to persuade constitute the main elements of soft power.”<sup>176</sup> Soft power includes many elements and actors such as culture, education, media, NGO’s, science and technology, tourism, economic cooperation and diplomacy. A country’s cultural prosperity and social capital are also reflected by soft power. Moreover, the use of soft power is related to the political system of a country. A transparent and democratic political system protecting fundamental rights and freedoms facilitates the country’s use of soft power. Thus, the democratic experience of Turkey is one of the main cornerstones of its soft power. Moreover, Turkey’s use of soft power in the Balkans, Middle East and Central Asia utilizes common cultural and historical experiences as well as common values. This commonality affected regional dynamics and created new spheres of influence for Turkey.<sup>177</sup>

In addition to the soft power, parliamentary diplomacy is one of the alternative ways to interact and cooperate with other countries and international organizations beside the traditional diplomacy. It is a way to use soft power in foreign relations. Weiglas and Boer describes parliamentary diplomacy as international activities implemented by parliamentary members with the aim of increasing mutual understanding among countries, the representation of people, and democratic legitimacy of inter-governmental organization. The process can be seen as a result of globalization and facilitate to reach some main goals as the promotion of democracy and transparency, as well as the elevation of inter-parliamentary cooperation.<sup>178</sup> Similarly, according to Noulas, parliamentary diplomacy can be defined as “the activities carried out by

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<sup>176</sup> Kaln, İ., Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey, *Perception*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Autumn 2011, p.8

<sup>177</sup> Kaln, İ., Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey, *Perception*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Autumn 2011, pp. 9-10

<sup>178</sup> Weiglas F.W., de Boer G., Parliamentary Diplomacy, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, No. 2, 2007, pp. 93-96

Parliaments in international relations, both within the limits of institutional competence and as a central factor of internal political scene.”<sup>179</sup>

For Cutler, parliamentary diplomacy represents a significant middle way between the traditional means of diplomacy and new means of transnational cooperation.<sup>180</sup> Although, international politics is seen as a ground of diplomats and ministers, one should be aware of the importance of the possible role of parliaments and parliamentarians in diplomacy. There are many parliamentary actors such as individual parliamentarians, political parties, local and national assemblies, regional and international parliaments acting in parliamentary diplomacy (parlomacy). This is critical for the conflict prevention and provision of mediation and dialogue. Parlomacy aims to reach long-term political dialogue on the base of trust and mutual understanding.<sup>181</sup>

For Hasanov, parliamentary diplomacy has an important role in terms of regional and global security. In this framework, one of the objectives of TÜRKPA has been acting for the provision and protection of peace and security both in the region and the international system.

Some parliamentary assemblies which have begun to have significant role in the global system are United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries.

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<sup>179</sup> Noulas G. , The Role of Parliamentary Diplomacy in Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy Journal, October 22, 2011, retrieved, from <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/10/22/the-role-of-parliamentary-diplomacy-in-foreign-policy/> (accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>180</sup> Cutler, R.M, The OSCE’s Parliamentary Diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in Comparative Perspective, *Studia Diplomatica*, Vol. LIX, No. 2006, pp. 82-83

<sup>181</sup> Fiott, D., On the Value of Parliamentary Diplomacy, Madariaga Paper, Vol. 4, No. 7, April 2011, pp. 1-5

Parliaments are involved in the foreign policy issues at both the institutional and diplomatic level. The latter is generally realized by bilateral diplomacy aiming to reinforce cooperation with other Parliaments or multilateral diplomacy developed through parliamentary delegations. Those delegations may act in parliamentary meetings of international organizations or in international parliamentary bodies in conference diplomacy. Those meetings are generally regional and focused on issues as human rights and organized crimes.<sup>182</sup>

In fact, parliamentarians have been active in the international arena for decades. However today, with globalization, the term parliamentary diplomacy is used to refer to international activities carried out by parliamentarians with the aim of intensification of mutual understanding among countries, to represent their citizens better in the international sphere and to improve inter-governmental institutions' democratic legitimacy. Thus, governments are no longer seen as the only actors in international arena. Parliamentary diplomacy has many targets as the promotion of democracy and transparency, as well as the support for further inter-parliamentary cooperation.<sup>183</sup>

The decisions of parliamentary organizations are not binding for governments. For the membership of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in an international parliamentary assembly, the decision of the Plenary upon a proposal of the Speaker is needed. Currently, the Assembly is represented in the following international parliamentary assemblies: Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Asian Parliamentary Assembly, Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Parliamentary Assembly of the

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<sup>182</sup> Noulas G. , The Role of Parliamentary Diplomacy in Foreign Policy, *Foreign Policy Journal*, October 22, 2011, retrieved from <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/10/22/the-role-of-parliamentary-diplomacy-in-foreign-policy/>(accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>183</sup> Weiglas, F.W., de Boer, G. Parliamentary Diplomacy, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 2, 2007, pp.93-96

North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries.<sup>184</sup>

#### **4.2. The Aim of Establishment and the Structure of the Organization**

The Secretary General of TÜRKPA, Ramil Hasanov gave an interview on TRT to Dr. Fahri Solak on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2011 about TÜRKPA and its activities. During this interview, he stated that TÜRKPA was established by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey in 2008 with the Istanbul Agreement as the other parliamentary assembly models in the international system. The assembly was first proposed by the President of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev in Turkish Speaking Countries' Heads of States Summit in 2006 in Antalya. In 2009, its official international secretariat was established and the first plenary session was held on. Today, TÜRKPA continues to perform its activities as an international organization and it has great importance in relations with the Turkic world. The main objective of the establishment has been improving relations between the member states through parliamentary diplomacy which is one of the new tools in international relations.<sup>185</sup>

Another important aim of TÜRKPA stated by Hasanov was the harmonization of the legislation activities in member states. His will serve to the next generations of countries. TÜRKPA deals with the legislation process of relations among member states. If works in coherence with the Turkic Council; however, TÜRKPA is not an organ of the Council. TÜRKPA's tasks are also in harmony with TÜRKSOY and the Turkic Academy. TÜRKPA is an international assembly which was established in a similar structure of Parliamentary Assembly of Organization for Security and

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<sup>184</sup>Turkish Delegations to the International Parliamentary Assemblies, retrieved from <http://global.tbmm.gov.tr/index.php/EN/yd/icerik/49> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

<sup>185</sup> Interview with Ramil Hasanov in Türkistan Gündemi by Dr.Fahri Solak in the television channel TRT Avaz, retrieved from <http://www.turkistangundemi.tv/08092011/turk-dili-konusan-ulkeler-parlamenter-asamblesi-turkpa-ve-calismalari.html> (accessed on 11<sup>st</sup> May 2013)

Cooperation in Europe, Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe with four members, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. Delegations of countries consist of nine deputies. The highest authority in the organization is the Assembly. The Plenary Session of the assembly includes 32 deputies and four speakers from each country. Hasanov stated that the United Nations recognized six Turkic countries, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; however, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are still not members of the organization. The second important organ of the organization is the Council of the Assembly consisting of five members, speakers of member countries. Since the parliament of Kazakhstan is bicameral, there are two Kazak members in the Council. However, each country has one vote. All decisions are taken through consensus. In terms of the organizational structure, in the second Plenary Session of TÜRKPA, important institutional steps were taken with the establishment of four permanent commissions which are Commission on Social, Culture and Humanitarian Issues, Commission on Economic, Trade and Financial Issues, Commission on International relations and the Commission on Legal Affairs. Those commissions propose recommendations to the plenary session for the negotiations of members. With those commissions the harmonization of law among member states would be achieved.<sup>186</sup>

Another step contributing to the institutionalization of the organization was the establishment of the permanent Secretariat in Baku which is a diplomatic mission according to Hasanov. In the Istanbul Agreement on the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries, the Secretariat is the administrative body of the Assembly which provides its permanent activity. Regulations on the Secretariat which was approved by the Council of Assembly determine activities and structure of the body.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Interview with Ramil Hasanov in Türkistan Gündemi by Dr.Fahri Solak in the television channel TRT Avaz, retrieved from <http://www.turkistangundemi.tv/08092011/turk-dili-konusan-ulkeler-parlamenter-asamblesi-turkpa-ve-calismalari.html> (accessed on 11<sup>st</sup> May 2013)

<sup>187</sup> Article 6 of Istanbul Agreement on the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries, the TÜRKPA Official Documents, retrieved from

The Secretary General is neutral and presents benefits of all member states. Both the Secretary General and deputies of secretary general are elected, not appointed.

### **4.3. Main Activities in the Region**

Main activities of TÜRKPA have been holding plenary sessions and observing elections in member states. Beyond those main tasks, TÜRKPA is an observer in different international organizations as Representatives of international organization as Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States, Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia and Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments.<sup>188</sup>

For Hasanov, the observer status of TÜRKPA in the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States is important. More observer status in international organizations is another objective of the organization. Hasanov reminded that Kairat Mami, the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, stated that they will try to develop and revitalize cultural and international relations with international organizations as TÜRKSOY.

One of the most important activities of the organization is Plenary Session in which important decisions are taken. There have been four Plenary Sessions of TÜRKPA. The first Plenary Session of TÜRKPA was held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009 in Baku and the Baku Declaration on the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries was concluded after the meeting. In this document, parties expressed their expectation that TÜRKPA would contribute to the performance of principles of

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<http://www.turk-pa.org/documents/Official%20Documents.%20pdf.pdf> (accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013)

<sup>188</sup> Activities of TÜRKPA, retrieved from <http://www.turkpa.org/cat.php?cat=2063&lang=en> (accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013)



independence.<sup>189</sup> In this meeting, the Secretary General and his deputies were elected by parliamentarians. In his speech, the Chairman-in-Office of TÜRKPA Ogtay Asadov (Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan), emphasized that the establishment of TÜRKPA is a significant step for the Turkic world and with the rise of the region in the world, the cooperation among member states had become more vital. He underlined the role of the parliamentary diplomacy in the world by stating that this is a new period in the inter-parliamentary cooperation contributing substantially to the improvement of the political dialogue among member states.<sup>190</sup> In the same meeting, the former Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Mehmet Ali Şahin, indicated the importance of common values such as history, religion, language, culture and customs of parties and stated that this was a historical step for Turkic nations which would make parties more sensitive to other member states' problems and provide an opportunity of exchange of experiences.<sup>191</sup>

The Baku Declaration signed after the meeting highlighted the forthcoming contributions of the organization to the deepening of political, economic and cultural ties among member states and the closeness of Turkic nations. Moreover, it referred to the importance of parliamentary diplomacy for improving political dialogue among member states.<sup>192</sup>

The second Plenary Session of TÜRKPA, was held on 27-28<sup>th</sup> April 2011 in Astana. The meeting had a special meaning: it was devoted to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence of the three Turkic post-Soviet republics. The Secretary General of the

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<sup>189</sup> I Plenary Session of TÜRKPA. Baku, 29 September 2009, retrieved from <http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=433&lang=en> (accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>190</sup> Speech of Mr. Ogtay Asadov, Chairman-in-Office of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), Speaker of Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, retrieved from <http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=432&lang=en> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

<sup>191</sup> Speech of Mr. Mehmet Ali Şahin, Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, retrieved from <http://www.turkpa.org/news.php?id=429&lang=en> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

<sup>192</sup> The Baku Declaration of The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries, retrieved on from <http://www.turk-pa.org/documents/Official%20Documents.%20pdf.pdf> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States Mahmut Erol Kılıç, the Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia Serhat Varlı, Secretary General of the Turkic Council, Halil Akıncı, and Deputy Secretary General of TÜRKSOY Fırat Purtaş attended the meeting. With the meeting, the term presidency of TÜRKPA was handed over to Kazakhstan from Azerbaijan. In the meeting, important amendments in TÜRKPA Rules of Procedure and Regulations were decided which would contribute to the structure of the organization. Among those amendments, there was the establishment of four permanent commission and the election of chairs of those newly formed bodies. Another novelty in the second Plenary Session had been TÜRKPA International Observers Mission in non-member countries. Moreover, English had become the official language of TÜRKPA and the number of members of delegations of member countries had been enlarged from 7 to 9.<sup>193</sup>

The final document of the second Plenary Session was the Astana declaration. For Hasanov, the declaration confirmed the decisiveness towards the intention of the realization of economic, political and cultural cooperation among members by parliamentary channels. What was vital about the document was the declaration that with its observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States, the organization had gained a complete inter-parliamentary structure. According to the document, the formation of the four permanent commissions would offer new level of cooperation since it would develop the decision making process.<sup>194</sup>

In the meeting, with the proposal of Turkey, it was decided to give PUIC observer status in TÜRKPA. In his speech, the former speaker of Turkish Grand National

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<sup>193</sup> II. Plenary Session of TÜRKPA. Astana, 27- 28<sup>th</sup> April 2011, retrieved from <http://www.turkpa.org/news.php?id=444&lang=en> (accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>194</sup> Astana Declaration of the Second Plenary Meeting of Parliamentary Assembly Turkic-Speaking Countries, retrieved from <http://www.turkpa.org/documents/Official%20Documents.%20pdf.pdf> (accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

Assembly, Şahin stated that this observer status is significant since OIC is the second most populous organization following the United Nations.<sup>195</sup>

The third Plenary Session was held on 14-15<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Bishkek. With this meeting, the Presidency was handed over to Kyrgyzstan from Kazakhstan. Representatives of international organization as Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States, Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking Countries and Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation made speeches, reports and recommendations prepared in the first meeting of permanent commissions and the budget of TÜRKPA for the year 2013 were adopted, as well as vice-chairs of those commissions were elected. After the meeting the Bishkek Declaration was signed.<sup>196</sup>

TÜRKPA term presidency was handed over to Turkey from Kyrgyzstan with the fourth Plenary Session which was held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013 in Ankara with the participation of Speaker of Turkish Grand National Assembly Cemil Çiçek, Chairman of Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic Asilbek Jeenbekov, Chairman of Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Chairman of Mazhilis of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nurlan Nigmatulin. During the meeting, Çiçek stated that TÜRKPA is different than a traditional parliamentary organization, because of the common history and brotherhood ties among nations of member states. He emphasized the importance of support for member states' candidacy in international organizations by reminding Turkey's temporary membership of the United Nations Security Council for 2015-2016, Istanbul's candidature for 2020 Olympics and Izmir's candidature for EXPO 2020. He added that Turkey expects to see Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a part of

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<sup>195</sup> Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Basın Açıklamaları, TBMM Başkanı Şahin Kazakistan'da., 27<sup>th</sup> April 2011, retrieved from [http://www.meclishaber.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber\\_portal.aciklama?p1=109085](http://www.meclishaber.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber_portal.aciklama?p1=109085) (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>196</sup> III. Plenary Session of TÜRKPA, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012, retrieved from <http://www.turkpa.org/news.php?id=546&lang=en> (on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

TÜRKPA.<sup>197</sup> In the speech of Çiçek, especially the emphasis on the candidature in international organizations, it is obvious that being a part of such organization increases the expectation for deeper bilateral relations and stronger regional cooperation. The support of the member countries for specific issues is in a way guaranteed by such institution.

To conclude, although TÜRKPA is a newly established organization, it serves for further cooperation. Moreover, it is an important result of the institutionalization process in relations and an arena for the implementation of parliamentary diplomacy. The importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a soft power is apparent in today's world of globalization. Although TÜRKPA includes only two Central Asian countries, it may be a model of the institutionalization of inter-parliamentary relations for other Central Asian countries Turkish parliament's expanding relations with other countries.

## **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC CULTURE (TÜRKSOY)**

The second part of this chapter focuses mainly the structure, aim, activities of the International Organization of Turkic Culture<sup>198</sup> (TÜRKSOY) and the influence and contributions of the organization to Turkey's relations with the Turkic Republics of Central Asia. With the transformation in TÜRKSOY's institutional structure in recent years, the organization has become a cultural diplomacy tool by actively contributing to the establishment of strong ties among Turkic nations. This part includes firstly a general analysis of cultural diplomacy. Secondly, the structure and

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<sup>197</sup>TÜRKPA Meclis Başkanları Toplantısı, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013, retrieved from <http://baskanlik.tbmm.gov.tr/haber.aspx?h=125563> (accessed on 28th June 2013)

<sup>198</sup> The title of the organization has been changed from Joint Administration of Turkic Culture and Arts (Türk Kültür ve Sanatları Ortak Yönetimi) into International Organization of Turkic Culture (Uluslararası Türk Kültür Teşkilatı); however, the use of TÜRKSOY continued to be used.

the aim of establishment of TÜRKSOY will be focused on. After the main activities of the organization related to Central Asian Republics were given, the impact of the organization in Turkey's relations with the regional countries will be examined.

#### **4.4. Cultural Diplomacy**

To understand cultural diplomacy, the US State Department's definition made in 1959 can be a starting point: "The direct and enduring contact between peoples of different nations...to help create a better climate of international trust and understanding in which official relations can operate." This definition is interpreted by Gienow-Hecht and Donfried as the presence of the cultural diplomacy in the traditional foreign policy making process but in an indirect way. Currently it has become a national policy supporting the promotion of a nation's culture in order to serve political objectives. It is important to state that different from cultural relations which grow naturally, cultural diplomacy is a formal process carried out by actors.<sup>199</sup>

Cultural diplomacy is the strategy to develop a mutual understanding between states by humanitarian interaction and exchange means. For states, the main objective of cultural diplomacy is to increase the reputability of the state and values represented by this state in the international community. Cultural diplomacy serves for a better recognition and awareness, as well as for the confidence building between states and nations. Mutual confidence is the main condition for political and economic cooperation between states. For this reason, the improvement of humanitarian and cultural relations plays a critical role for the provision of regional and international stability. Cultural relations are the first step for building strong ties with neighbors and allies and for solving conflicts. Thus, cultural diplomacy is not only the starting

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<sup>199</sup> Gienow J. C.E & Donfried, *The Model of Cultural Diplomacy: Power, Distance, and the Promise of Civil Society* in Gienow J. C.E & Donfried (eds), *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, 2010, pp. 13-14

point of multi-dimensional cooperation, but also the key for regional and global peace.<sup>200</sup>

After the Second World War, for a sustainable world peace and stability in international relations system, UNESCO was established within the United Nations. UNESCO, has brought the cultural diplomacy understanding in foreign affairs. States, by appointing representative at UNESCO have aimed to present their culture and to increase mutual interaction and cooperation.<sup>201</sup>

With the end of the Cold War, implementers and means of diplomacy have changed. New actors such as individuals, NGO's, local governments and international firms have become parts of diplomacy. Globalization has also been effective in this transformation. Parallel diplomacy implemented by NGO's has become more apparent.<sup>202</sup>

According to the Institute of Public Diplomacy, as a strategic communication tool, public diplomacy includes activities serving to understand, inform and influence public opinion. The aim is not to propagate, but to build a strategic communication tool for different sections of society. Public Diplomacy predicts mutual communication and interaction. The first objective is to listen the group which is addressed, and to describe priorities of this group. The second objective is information sharing, persuasion and impact. This is a dynamic and multi-dimensional communication process. Soft power, based on a value-centered definition of power, is the most important tool of public diplomacy. Another important element of public diplomacy is the public opinion. Since, without the support of public opinion, it is

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<sup>200</sup> Purtaş, F. (2012), Kültürel Diplomasi ve TÜRKSOY, retrieved from <http://mekam.org/mekam/kulturel-diplomasi-ve-TURKSOY> (accessed on 7th July 2013)

<sup>201</sup> Purtaş, F. (2012), Diplomasinin Dönüşümü ve Kültürel Diplomasi, retrieved from <http://mekam.org/mekam/diplomasinin-donusumu-ve-kulturel-diplomasi> (accessed on 7th July 2013)

<sup>202</sup> Purtaş, F. (2012), Diplomasinin Dönüşümü ve Kültürel Diplomasi, retrieved from <http://mekam.org/mekam/diplomasinin-donusumu-ve-kulturel-diplomasi> (accessed on 7th July 2013)

not possible to make and implement policies on fields of economy, foreign policy, energy and environment.<sup>203</sup>

#### **4.5. The Aim of Establishment and the Structure of the Organization**

Ministers of Culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Turkey came together in 1992 both in Istanbul and Baku and decided to cooperate in cultural fields. During the meeting in Almaty on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1993, they signed the agreement on “Principles of Activities and Establishment of TÜRKSOY” which established the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSOY). The organization was enlarged with memberships of the Altai Republic, the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Republic of Khakassia, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Republic of Tatarstan, the Tyva Republic (all from the Russian Federation), Gagauzia (Moldova) and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

TÜRKSOY is an organization supporting cooperation in culture and art among Turkic countries without interfering in the domestic and foreign policies of the member countries.<sup>204</sup> The official language of the organization is the Turkish language spoken in Turkey and its center is in Ankara. All members and observers have the same rights. The organization does not only focus on the Turkic speaking geography, but it aims to cooperate with all official and non-official organizations aiming to protect fundamental human rights and freedoms in their activities, as well as international relations.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> For more information about the Office of Public Diplomacy , visit the official website <http://kdk.gov.tr/>

<sup>204</sup> Durmuş M., Yılmaz H. (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri, in Aydınğün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, p. 55

The agreement on the Principles of Activities and Establishment of Joint Administration of Turkic Culture and Art was signed in Almaty on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1993 by Minister of Cultures of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan. The aim of the agreement which was stated in the first article was to make Turkish speaking countries and people be aware of each other; to show the importance of Turkic culture and support the protection and development of Turkish heritage, art, artists and to introduce principles of the national culture to the next generations for amicable dialogues. The parties also agreed to take into account all international agreements and contracts on cultural field. According to the agreement, the general director is elected by consensus. TÜRKSÖY's personnel and scope of work are determined by the general director. All parties employ representatives in the joint administration who are appointed by Ministers of Culture. Decisions on TÜRKSÖY's activities are voted by majority. According to the agreement, the financial resource of the organization includes a fund consisting of contributions of parties, as well as other activities and initiatives compatible with international law and rules.<sup>206</sup> The highest decision making authority the organization is the Council of Ministers including Ministers of Culture of member states. Those decisions are implemented by the general secretary which was general directory before 2009. Between 1994 and 2006 the general director was the former Minister of Azerbaijan Polad Bülbüloğlu. During the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the Permanent Council of the Turkish Speaking Countries, the former Minister of Culture of Kazakhstan Duysen Kaseinov, was elected as the director general of TÜRKSÖY on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The name of organization was changed as “International Organization of Turkic Republic” during the 26<sup>th</sup> term meeting which was held on 16-17<sup>th</sup> October 2009 in Baku.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Hakkımızda, retrieved from <http://www.TÜRKSÖY.org.tr/TR/belge/1-73883/hakkimizda.html> (accessed on 28th June 2013)

<sup>206</sup> Agreement on the Establishment and Principles of Activities of TÜRKSÖY retrieved from [http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR\\_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc077/kanuntbmmc077/kanuntbmmc07703973.pdf](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc077/kanuntbmmc077/kanuntbmmc07703973.pdf) (accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2013)

<sup>207</sup> Hakkımızda, retrieved from <http://www.TÜRKSÖY.org.tr/TR/belge/1-73883/hakkimizda.html> (accessed on 28th June 2013)



TÜRKSOY's main goals are determined as supporting the cultural restructuring in the region and the world by conceptualizing the new balances in international relations; building friendly relations among Turkish speaking peoples and nations in order to explore, disclose and preserve the common Turkic language, culture, history, art, customs and traditions as well as preparing a framework for transferring these values to future generations; establishing the necessary environment in contemplation of enabling the use of a common language and alphabet in the Turkic World and lastly, supporting scientific studies regarding the common past of the peoples of the Turkic World as well as their history, language, literature, culture and art.<sup>208</sup>

The aim of the organization is to activate mutual research on culture and for the reinforcement the cultural partnership, to promote Turkish culture in the world and to hand down cultural traditions and values of the Turkic world to the next generation. In this framework, to realize cultural cooperation by providing coordination among ministries is targeted. This coordination is not limited by independent states. The organization has a special character since there is few organization embracing non-independent entities. In the meeting which was held in 1993, Tatarstan with Azerbaijan's proposal and Bashkortostan with Kazakhstan's proposal became observer members. Then, the Altai Republic, the Tuva Republic, the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic and Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia became observers. Currently TÜRKSOY became an organization with 14 members including the Turkish Republic of the Northern Cyprus.<sup>209</sup>

The field of study of TÜRKSOY are indicated as follows: developing cultural and artistic relations among Turkish speaking countries and peoples by actualizing various programs and projects; production of television and radio programs, documentaries and films that reflect the common cultural and artistic richness of the

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<sup>208</sup> Goals of TÜRKSOY, retrieved from <http://www.TURKSOY.org.tr/EN/belge/2-27273/goals.html> (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013)

<sup>209</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

Turkic World; organizing performances and festivals in fields of theatre, opera, ballet, folk dancing, pioneering activities in such fields, cooperating with other organizations; releasing periodical and non-periodical publications, organizing memorial days and celebrations for important people that served a great deal to developing a common Turkish language, history, culture and art.<sup>210</sup> In terms of the history and the structure of the organization, Purtaş stated following:

The establishment process has begun with the newly emerging republics. Turkey aimed to develop cooperation with those republics in all fields. In this framework, meetings of Ministers of Culture of Turkic states were started. The first meeting was held in Istanbul in 1992 and in this meeting common language, history and cultural heritage were emphasized. The idea about a multilateral cooperation mechanism on those common values was pointed out. In the second meeting which was held in Baku in the same year, in order to erase the estrangement among nations, to increase mutual understanding, as well as to revitalize and pass down the forgotten cultural heritage the establishment of such an organization was proposed. Finally, in the next meeting in Almaty in 1993, the agreement on Principles of Activities and Establishment of TÜRKSÖY was signed among Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The agreement would enter into force after the conclusion of the internal approval process; however, Uzbekistan neither approved the agreement, nor withdrew from it. The headquarters was decided to be in Ankara and the language to be Turkish. In the first years after the establishment, the organization lacked an institutional structure. In 1997, with the support of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, personnel and financial affairs of the organization were regulated.<sup>211</sup>

#### **4.6. Main Activities in the Region**

TÜRKSÖY was formed according to the model of UNESCO, thus aims and activities of the organization are compatible with UNESCO. This fact provides an

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<sup>210</sup> TÜRKSÖY'un Çalışma Alanları, retrieved from <http://www.TÜRKSÖY.org.tr/TR/belge/1-73745/calisma-alanlari.html> (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

<sup>211</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSÖY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

opportunity to Turkic speaking countries in their nation and state building as well as their democratization process. For this reason to understand the UNESCO of the Turkish world, UNESCO's aim and activities should also be generally examined. The organization aims to develop dialogue among civilizations and cultures in the framework of respect for commonly shared values. This dialogue would support sustainable development, human rights, mutual respect, lessening of poverty which are main targets of UNESCO's activities and competencies in fields of education, science, culture and communication. Gender equality, education quality, sustainable development, social and ethnical challenges, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, culture of peace and communication are main focuses of the organization.<sup>212</sup> As Fırat Purtaş mentioned, to increase cooperation among national commission in UNESCO is another important activity of TÜRKSOY. Today, our permanent representative in UNESCO has begun to act as the speaker of Turkic Speaking countries. This is a concrete achievement of the organization. Moreover, joint projects were held among national commissions.<sup>213</sup>

In this framework, relations with the two organizations were legalized and "Agreement between the Joint Administration of the Turkic Culture and Arts (TÜRKSOY) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization" was concluded in Istanbul on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1996 by former General Directors of the two organizations, Polad Bülbüloğlu and Federico Mayor. The agreement aims to build cooperative bonds with each other in fields of education, science and culture through similar tasks and activities. With the document, the parties agreed on realizing mutual consultations on above-mentioned issues, informing each other about their activities, exchanging information and documents,

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<sup>212</sup> Introducing UNESCO: what we are, retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/introducing-unesco/> (accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>213</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

assisting each other for the technical studies.<sup>214</sup> In Optical Character Recognition document of UNESCO, TÜRKSOY was introduced as follows:

The Joint Administration of the Turkic Culture and Arts (TÜRKSOY) aims at the promotion of cultural co-operation among its Member States and at the preservation, revitalization and development of Turkic culture as an integral part of human civilization. Through such co-operation, the organization seeks to forge close links among its Member States and other countries in order to establish greater understanding between peoples and thus contribute to the consolidation of peace and security.<sup>215</sup>

Durmuş and Yılmaz also state that TÜRKSOY has similar objectives and scope of work with UNESCO and aims to perform UNESCO's functions in its area. Main activities of the organization includes generally the publications of studies on science, culture and art, as well as on worthies of the Turkic world, Nevruz festival celebrations, meetings of painters and photographers, exhibitions, opera days and memorial events.<sup>216</sup> Purtaş also emphasized that TÜRKSOY is the UNESCO of the Turkic world since the organization has mainly focused on culture and arts of the Turkic world and it has adopted principles of UNESCO. This fact has been repeatedly expressed in meetings.

TÜRKSOY tries to remind significant names of the Turkic world and increase the awareness about Turkic historical heritage. The year 2010 was announced as “Zeki Velidi Togan Year” and 2011 as “Abdullah Tukay Year” the opening ceremony of which was held in Ankara on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011 with the participation of Turkish

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<sup>214</sup> UNESCO ile Yapılan İşbirliği Anlaşması, retrieved from <http://www.TURKSOY.org.tr/TR/belge/1-75588/unesco-ile-yapilan-isbirligi-anlasmasi.html> (accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>215</sup> Optical Character Recognition document of UNESCO, retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001035/103511E.pdf> (accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>216</sup> Durmuş M., Yılmaz H. (2012) Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bölgedeki Faaliyetleri, in Aydınğün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, p. 554

Culture and Tourism Minister Ertuğrul Günay and Tatar Minister of Culture Ziyla Valeyeva.<sup>217</sup> TÜRKSOY's announcement of the year 2011 as "Abdullah Tukay Year" who was an important Tatar poet was welcomed by Tatars in Central Asia. Taking into account that the most populous Crimean Tatar diaspora lives in Turkey and those who live in Kazakhstan aim to organize and contact with those living in Turkey, this was a significant event.<sup>218</sup>

Moreover, in 2011 the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of TÜRKSOY was celebrated and the year 2012 was dedicated to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Azerbaijani author Mirza Fethali Ahundzade and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birthday of Khakas Turcologist Nikolay Katanov. By 2012, one city of the Turkic world has begun to be declared as the capital of TÜRKSOY which was initially proposed in 2010 İstanbul Summit of Heads of States of the Turkic Speaking Countries. In 2012, the first capital was Astana, in 2013 it is Eskişehir. For the year 2014, Kazan was proposed as the cultural capital by Tatarstan.<sup>219</sup>

In the interview conducted by the author, the Deputy General Secretary Fırat Purtaş, gave brief information about other activities of TÜRKSOY such as the celebration of important anniversaries. The first example of this was in 1995, the thousandth year of the Epic of Manas was celebrated in Kyrgyzstan with the participations of Ministers of Culture of TÜRKSOY member states.<sup>220</sup>

Main aim of traditional activities of TÜRKSOY is bringing together people of the Turkic world and providing opportunities to realize joint projects. Since, Turkic

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<sup>217</sup> Opening Ceremony Of "2011 Abdullah Tukay Year" was held in Ankara, retrieved from <http://www.TURKSOY.org.tr/EN/belge/2-28815/opening-ceremony-of-2011-abdullah-tukay-year-was-held-i-.html> (accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

<sup>218</sup> Aydıngün A., Tüfekçioğlu, H. (2012) Avrasya'nın Merkezinde Dünyaya açılan Ülke: Kazakistan Aydıngün, A., Balım Ç. (eds) *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, T.C. Başbakanlık Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını: 411, Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi: 87, Ankara, 2012, pp. 123-124

<sup>219</sup> TÜRKSOY 29<sup>th</sup> Term Activity Report (September 2011-September 2012) , Ankara, 2012

<sup>220</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

nations will develop closer ties and social interaction will improve with the increasing cooperation among artists. Just as UNESCO, TÜRKSOY, by aiming peace, focuses on dialogue, mutual sharing and tolerance. The organization targets the promotion of the Turkic culture in the world and the deepening of the interaction between the Turkic culture and other cultures. In this context, TÜRKSOY is a cultural diplomacy tool.<sup>221</sup>

Meetings of artists as painters, photographers, poets, sculptors and opera singers from members of the organization for the exchange of experiment are other main activities. The meetings of painters and days of opera were started to be organized by 1997. Besides those meetings, scientific meetings and publications are also important activities of TÜRKSOY. Also, as in UNESCO, there are commemoration events. The year 2010, the 120<sup>th</sup> birthday of Azerbaijani poet Zeki Velidi Togan, was celebrated by the organization. In this framework, a book exhibition and an international scientific conference were organized. On 26<sup>th</sup> August 2010, Zeki Velidi Togan Park was opened in Ankara by Keçiören Municipality Assembly's decision.<sup>222</sup> In 2011, the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Tatar poet Abdullah Tukay was celebrated, the opening ceremony of the bust of Abdullah Tukay was held in Ankara on January 25, 2010 and Tukay Park was opened in Istanbul.<sup>223</sup> The year 2012 was declared as the year of Mirza Fatali Ahunzade and Nikolay Katano.<sup>224</sup> For Purtaş commemoration events are essential for closer recognition among members.<sup>225</sup>

Since Eskişehir is the cultural capital of the Turkic World, TÜRKSOY's 16<sup>th</sup> Gathering of Painters was held in this city on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013. The event was realized with the contributions of the Presidency of the Agency of Turkish Cooperation and

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<sup>221</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

<sup>222</sup> TÜRKSOY Activity Report 2008-2011, Ankara 2010, pp. 301-303

<sup>223</sup> TÜRKSOY Activity Report 2008-2011, Ankara 2010, pp. 309-315

<sup>224</sup> TÜRKSOY Activity Report 2008-2011, Ankara 2010, pp. 129-137

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

Coordination of the Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey and with the participation of artists from 18 countries.<sup>226</sup>

TÜRKSOY has witnessed significant transformations towards institutionalization. By 2009, the official name of the organization “Joint Administration of Turkic Culture and Arts” was altered with “The International Organization of Turkic Culture”. Moreover the general directory organ of the organization was transformed to the general secretary. According to Purtaş, those changes were essential for the global perception towards TÜRKSOY as an international organization. Currently, there are nine representatives out of fourteen members in the general secretary. The secretary general was Bülbüloğlu until 2006 when he was appointed as ambassador. Between 2006 and 2008 the task was temporarily performed by Turkey and in 2008, Kazakh Minister of Culture Duisen Kaseinov was elected as the secretary general by unanimity.<sup>227</sup>

The transformation process of TÜRKSOY, started by 2008, has been reflected to the activities of the organization. The promotion of the Turkic culture in the global level and the international cooperation has become more and more apparent. Previously those activities were realized generally in Turkic countries or other member republics; however, after 2008, organizational activities have been also held in Europe, other non-member states and international organizations. For instance, Nevruz celebrations took place within UNESCO in 2010, as well as the United Nations in 2011. This was followed by other painting exhibitions of the Turkic world in Germany, Italy, France and Lithuania. Moreover, cooperation with other international organizations has been strengthened. A protocol was signed with ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> The Cultural Capital of the Turkic World Eskisehir Hosts TÜRKSOY’s 16th Gathering of Painters, retrieved from <http://www.TURKSOY.org.tr/EN/belge/2-29817/the-cultural-capital-of-the-turkic-world-eskisehir-host-.html> (accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

<sup>227</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013

In addition, a cooperation protocol was signed with the Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IFESCO) on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009. With this protocol, a legal base for cooperation in culture, art, education and science was formed. This collaboration would be supported by variable joint projects in those fields, one of which is the establishment of “Eurasian Turcologists’ Encyclopedia” project.<sup>229</sup> Furthermore, cooperation protocol was signed in September 2009 between TÜRKSOY and the Humanitarian Cooperation Council of the CIS.<sup>230</sup>

Increasing cooperation with local governments is also important for the organization. The most apparent proof of this is the Nevruz celebrations. In 2013, due to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of TÜRKSOY, Nevruz celebrations in 20 different cities in Turkey took place. With those celebrations, Nevruz has been revitalized. After the collapse of the SU, Nevruz was started to be celebrated in Turkic Republics and in 1995 in Turkey with joint efforts of TÜRKSOY and the Turkish Ministry of Culture. Today, this festival is not only celebrated in members, but also within UNESCO, the United Nations General Assembly and in London. The aim is to present Nevruz as our common heritage and value dedicated to the humanity.<sup>231</sup>

Cultural relations and cultural diplomacy contributes to bilateral and regional cooperation by reinforcing mutual recognition. For Turkey’s relations with Central Asia, sharing and learning cultural characteristics and significant individuals for those countries are vital. Since, the starting point of relations is common cultural, historical and linguistic ties. However, there are problematic issues for TÜRKSOY.

For Purtaş, the recognition of TÜRKSOY in Turkey is a problematical issue. The organization is much more recognized in other members when compared with

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<sup>229</sup> TÜRKSOY and IFESCO (The Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation) Signed an Agreement, retrieved from <http://www.TURKSOY.org.tr/EN/belge/2-28451/TURKSOY-and-ifesco-the-intergovernmental-foundation-fo-.html> (accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

<sup>230</sup> TÜRKSOY Activity Report 2008-2011, Ankara 2010, p. 63.

<sup>231</sup> Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSOY, Ankara on 11 July 2013



Turkey. On one hand, this is related with the limited importance that mass media in Turkey gives to cultural issues. On the other hand, the dynamic agenda of Turkey affects this fact. Moreover, the budget of TÜRKSOY including the contributions of members remains insufficient for promotional activities of the organization. Also, mutual acquaintance should be supported by educational policies. TÜRKSOY tries to increase awareness among members and this can be accomplished by education.

Though Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan do not participate in Turkic Council Summits, this is not the case for TÜRKSOY. Although the Uzbek Minister of Culture has not been participating to term meetings of the Permanent Council of Ministers of Culture of Turkic Speaking Countries, Uzbek artists contribute to organizational events. Turkmenistan approved the TÜRKSOY agreement; however, there is no Turkmen representative in Ankara.

To conclude, both institutions have become important tools in Turkish foreign policy as soft power mechanisms such as parliamentary and cultural diplomacy. The institutionalization steps in both organizations have served to the strengthening of Turkey's activities and presence in the region.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

Turkey, being the first country to recognize the independence of Central Asian Republics, has taken significant steps both to increase its influence on the region and to improve its bilateral relations. Turkey contributed actively to the promotion of democracy, stability, prosperity and security in Central Asia. Turkey also developed its relations with these countries through strategic partnership agreements and various cooperation mechanisms. This general policy has been supported by Turkey's regular foreign aid, various projects and activities in the region. With the new dimension that Turkish foreign policy has taken in the 2000's, an additional emphasis has been given to institutionalization in relations with Central Asian Republics.

The main focus of the thesis is tracing the development and impact of institutional relations between Turkey and the five Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in the post-Soviet era. To that end, four specific institutions that play an important role in those relations are analyzed: TİKA, YTATB, TÜRKSÖY and TÜRKPİA. In addition to these four institutions, Yunus Emre Institute and its activities in the region are also analyzed. The assistance aids, various economic, parliamentary, cultural and educational projects and activities of those institutions in the region are also analyzed in order to give a comprehensive study of Turkey's relations with Central Asia at an institutional level. The thesis argues that the new foreign policy orientation of Turkey in the 2000's contributed to the establishment of a more rational and institutionalized framework for Turkish-Central Asian relations. In this context, the study analyzed the process of institutionalization as well as the role these four key institutions played in the development of relations between Turkey and Central Asia in the post-Soviet era. Although the thesis focuses on the period after 1991, a specific emphasis is put on the new foreign policy outlook of Turkey in the 2000's that contributed more to the

process of institutionalization when compared with the previous decade. During the 2000's, with the changing regional, international conditions and the new concepts and approaches determined in Turkish foreign policy, Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries have gained a new dimension. Besides this, new institutions and organizations dealing with the region were established.

This thesis analyzed the importance of four main institutions for the development of Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries within the framework of institutionalism. The importance of institutionalism does not only include the routinization of activities and the establishment of an institution, but also the steps for the increasing the effectiveness, the recognition of the authority of that institution. In terms of institutional the establishment of YTATB and TÜRKPA, this is clear. YTATB aims to institutionalize diaspora politics and TÜRKPA aims to institutionalize parliamentary relations between member countries as well as parliamentary diplomacy. In terms of improvement, this has been seen both in TİKA and TÜRKSOY. Although their establishment lies to the first years of the independence of Central Asian countries, pertinent, serious and result-oriented steps including structural and functional transformation automatically have served directly to their effectiveness and influenced both bilateral and multilateral relations. Such effectiveness is directly related to specialization of these institutions. For instance, TÜRKSOY carries out the cultural pillar of regional cooperation. This can also be seen apparently in the last decade of relations with the establishment of YTATB and the Yunus Emre Institute. The former is responsible for both Turkish citizens and relative communities in the region, in addition to improving cultural and educational relations. Similarly the Yunus Emre Institute is responsible for Turkish Cultural Centers in the region and the Turkology project. Earlier, TİKA was implementing those projects and activities. However, their transfer to new institutions is important for the efficiency and success of projects and activities, as well as providing opportunities for actions. Since there are many areas of cooperation, the division of labor among institutions has increased professionalism and expertise.

Besides institutionalization and specialization, importance and visibility of the soft power in Turkish foreign policy towards Central Asia is also realized by those institutions. Certainly, high-level visits and political dialogue held among politicians and diplomats (the traditional ways of diplomacy) is the leading way for bilateral, regional and international relations. However, with the increasing impact of globalization, actors and issues in international relations have been diversified. Foreign aids, diaspora politics, cultural and parliamentary diplomacy have created new areas of influence for Turkey. It is apparent that the above-mentioned institutions and organizations implementing soft power tools as foreign aid, cultural diplomacy and parliamentary diplomacy contributed to Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries. With their activities, both bilateral and multilateral relations improved, especially during the 2000's, although at varying degrees in each country. Based on these differences, it can be argued that TİKA has a flexible structure and it develops projects according to the needs and demands in each country. As for YTATB, it focuses on some specific issues such as citizenship, diaspora, related communities and Ahıska Turks, and does not pursue a regional policy towards Central Asia. This approach may be useful for the improvement of relations with Central Asian countries at a more institutional level.

This thesis uses the institutional theory as its theoretical basis and the four main institutions of TİKA, YTATB, TÜRKPA and TÜRKSOY are analyzed as key institutions involved in the process of developing relations with Central Asia besides the state. Their mere establishment represents the institutionalization process of Turkey's relations with five Central Asian republics. In other words, TİKA was established as the institution responsible for foreign aids towards regional countries, YTATB was established as a diaspora institution which is also related with the relative communities of Turkey including Central Asia. Moreover, TÜRKPA has institutionalized Turkey's parliamentary relations with two regional countries Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, TÜRKSOY is an important international organization in terms of institutionalizing cultural relations between Turkey and Central Asian countries.

In this context, when we look at the place of those four institutions within the framework of the institutional theory, it is possible to suggest that there are two common points that can be associated with all of them. First of all, normative institutionalism that deals with the question of how institutions function by norms and values can be applicable for these four institutions, as they all are based on a value or norm shaping their activities. These norms and values can be stated as the necessity of giving foreign and humanitarian aid in TİKA, necessity of improving ties with citizens and relative communities in YTATB, the necessity of enhancing parliamentary diplomacy in TÜRKPA, and the development of cultural diplomacy and interaction in TÜRKSOY. Secondly, as stated by Goswami, the importance of institutions in terms of facilitating international dialogue, negotiations and conflict resolutions, as well as building acceptable behavior principles to further cooperation all apply to TİKA, YTATB, TÜRKPA and TÜRKSOY. Development assistance provided by TİKA, regional activities of YTATB, the initiatives for the increase of parliamentary dialogue of TÜRKPA and the developing cultural relations by TÜRKSOY are all activities which have affected Turkey's dialogue with regional countries while at the same time positively affecting Turkey's image in the region.

Moreover, when we look at TİKA another issue emphasized by the institutional theory, that is, institutional change, gains importance. The transformation that is witnessed by this institution can be connected with the 'layers' model of institutional change mentioned by Mahoney & Thelen. This model offers new rules which are attached to old rules. There is not a total change of institutions or rules, but there are revisions and additions to the original core. For instance, TİKA has gained new competencies such as the authority of reporting Turkey's foreign aid. Its main aim and scope of area have not changed, but additional duties were given to this institution. In other words, there has been a continuation in the institution. In this way, TİKA's transformation is also compatible with Jepperson's institutional development model of institutional change, representing a continuation rather than creation. Furthermore, to understand TİKA's current activities, this thesis traced briefly the historical background of the institution. In this context, the emphasis of Berger and Luckmann on the importance of an historical approach including the

argument that the transformation process of an organization can be evaluated with its natural history was also used in this thesis.

YTATB is the diaspora institution of Turkey aiming to reach citizens and related communities living abroad. In other words, it ascribes importance on societal interaction in the international arena. In this context, Peter's emphasis on international institutionalism as a model in the historical background of the institutional theory provided a basis of analysis of this institution. This approach assumes the presence of structured interactions within state level institutions as well as societal institutions structuring the relations between state and society, including interest groups.

When we look at TÜRKPA and TÜRKSOY, Goswami's argument that international institutions are used for the improvement of international reputation of a country becomes important. Turkey's being active in both of those international organizations has directly affected its image in a positive way in the region. These institutions are analyzed as international organizations in this thesis in the light of the emphasis of Rittberger, Zangl and Kruck. For them, international institutions can help states to cooperate successfully by reducing uncertainty and stabilizing states' expectations from each other. Moreover the neo-institutionalist theory also ascribes importance to international organizations by offering that there is always a requirement for international organizations since they help to complete cooperative solutions in the international arena through the provision of reliable information and the elimination of mutual uncertainties. Goswami also focused on the role of institutions for further cooperation in the international arena by bringing sides together and lessen distrust between them.

TÜRKSOY also witnessed a process of transformation after 2008. Similar to TİKA, the 'layers' model of institutional change where there are revisions and additions to the original core applied to this institution. The election of the new secretary general just before the transformation process can be analyzed with Scott's emphasis on leadership arguing that effective leaders were more likely to define new institutional values in an organization.

All in all, main concepts of the institutional theory such as institutionalization, institutional change and institutional development offered a theoretical basis in order to show the role those institutions play in the development of Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries in 2000's. That tendency, if it continues, can be expected to improve and deepen the relations between the two sides in the coming decades, further contributing to Turkey's role and presence in the region.

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**Interviews and Contacts:**

Interview with Rahman Nurdun, Advisor of the President of TİKA Serdar Çam, on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 in Ankara

Interview with Mehmet Köse Deputy Chairman of the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013 in Ankara

Interview with Fırat Purtaş, in the headquarters of TÜRKSÖY, Ankara on 11 July 2013 in Ankara

Contacts with the Program Coordination Offices of TİKA in Central Asia by e-mail.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **1. Questions for TİKA's Coordination Offices in the region (obtained via e-mail)**

1. Could you give general information about coordination offices of TİKA in the region?
2. What is the total amount of development assistance and number of projects in the region for the last 10 years?
3. What is the general attitude towards TİKA in the region?
4. Do you think that the effectiveness of TİKA has increased within the last 10 years compared to the first 10 years in the region? If it has been increased, which factors are more relevant?

#### **2. Questions for the interview with Rahman Nurdun, Advisor of the President of TİKA Serdar Çam (Ankara, TİKA, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013)**

1. Could you give general information on TİKA's establishment purposes? Has TİKA been modeled after other development assistance organizations?
2. Does TİKA operate in accordance with OECD-DAC standards?
3. How do the structural changes reflect on activities of TİKA in the region?

4. Has the importance given to Central Asia diminished with the new foreign policy expansions in the last 10 years?
5. If it has been increased or decreased, which factors are more associated?
6. What are the contributions of TİKA to Turkey's relations with Central Asia?

**3. Questions for the interview with Fırat Purtaş, Deputy Secretary General of TÜRKSOY (Ankara, TÜRKSOY, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013)**

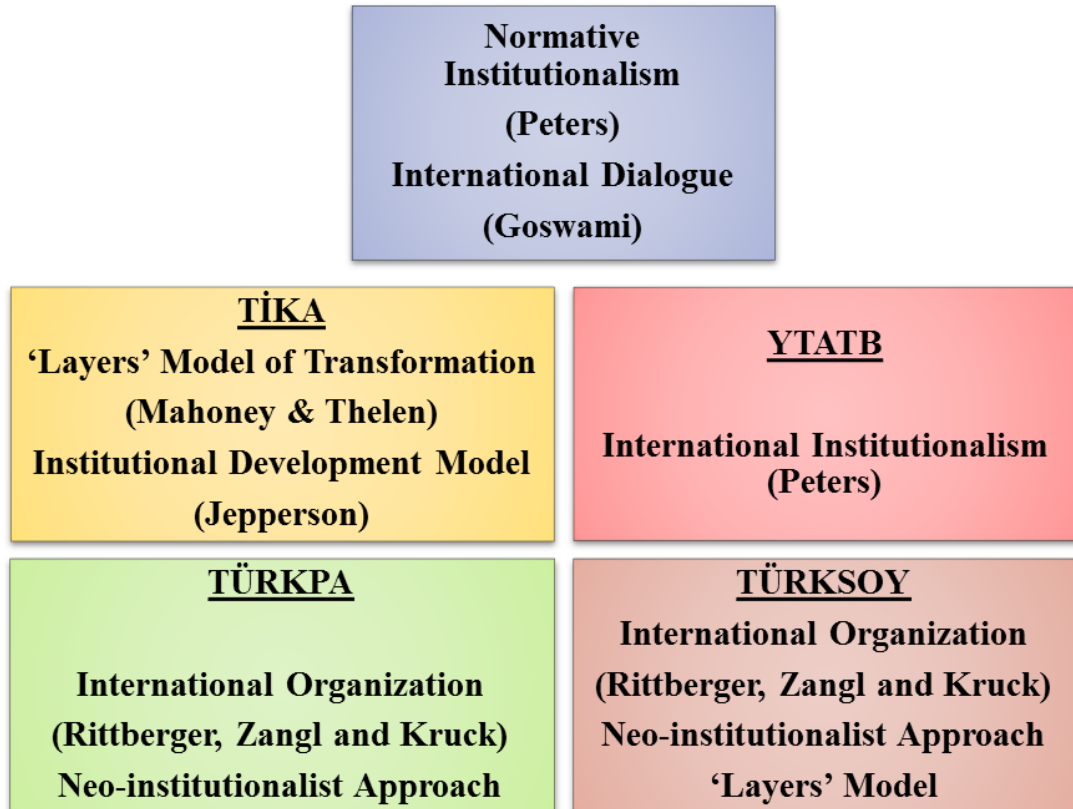
1. Could you give general information on TÜRKSOY's establishment purposes, basic principles and its history?
2. What are the main purposes of the organization?
3. What are your opinions about the fact that the purpose and fields of activity of TÜRKSOY are very similar to UNESCO's?
4. What are TÜRKSOY's activities/projects in Central Asia?
5. Does TÜRKSOY contribute to our relations with Central Asia as a means of cultural diplomacy?

**4. Questions for the interview with Mehmet Köse, Deputy Chairman of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Community (Ankara, YTATB, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013)**

1. Could you give general information on YTAT's establishment purposes, basic principles, history and fields of activity?
2. What is the definition "diaspora"?

3. Is YTAT a diaspora institution?

**APPENDIX B**



Approaches in institutional theory and matching-up of those approaches with the four institutions