



THE 11th SUMMIT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES: HIGHLIGHTS AND FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

The 11th Summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) was held in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, on November 6, 2024. The 11th Summit, where the Presidency passed from Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan, can be considered a pivotal turning point in terms of revealing the strengthened position of the Turkic world in the regional and global contexts. Under the theme “Strengthening the Turkic World: Economic Integration, Sustainable Development, Digital Future, and Security for All”, leaders discussed and documented 122 articles under main topics, including: “Politics, Foreign Policy, and Security”, “Economic and Sectoral Cooperation”, “People-to-People Cooperation”, “Institutional Cooperation in the Turkic World”, and “Cooperation with External Partners” (OTS, 2024). As observed, each OTS summit has served as a platform for decisions that bring new momentum to ongoing cooperation and integration processes. This analysis will explore the new initiatives and approaches highlighted at the Bishkek Summit, along with future expectations within the framework of the past four summit declarations.

As is known, the 2021 Istanbul Summit is considered as a milestone, marking both the organization’s name changes and the adoption of the Turkic World 2040 Vision Document (OTS, 2021). At the 2022 Samarkand Summit, a series of significant documents were signed, and the OTS 2022-2026 Strategic Document was adopted (OTS, 2022). Undoubtedly, one of the most notable decisions at the Samarkand Summit was the acceptance of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as an observer member in the OTS. The 2023 Astana Summit, held under the theme “Turk Time”, saw several key decisions aimed at operationalizing the TURAN Special Economic Zone (TURANSEZ) and enhancing trade relations and connectivity among member countries, particularly through the Middle Corridor (OTS, 2023).

Beyond the ongoing cooperation agenda, seven key points stand out in the Bishkek Summit declaration. The first and most widely discussed is undoubtedly the adoption of a new flag for the OTS. As stated in the declaration, the new design “reflects the symbols of Turkic identity, unity, common heritage, and values”, reinforcing the emphasis on a common future. The second notable point is the ratification of the Charter of the Turkic World, aimed at strengthening Turkic world ideals and cultural unity. Although specific details about its scope have not yet been shared, it is expected that the document will be discussed among member states and shared with the public in the coming year. Another

important issue recorded under the institutional cooperation heading is the ongoing work on a common alphabet, monitored and considered closely by member states, which is being conducted by a commission established within the International Turkic Academy. The process of acceptance and ratification of this long-awaited common alphabet, agreed upon during the most recent meeting held in Baku on September 9-11, 2024, is expected to take some additional time. Furthermore, the Bishkek Summit declaration emphasizes a more proactive stance and strategic vision on regional and global issues, including relations with the European Union and African Union, as well as developments in Palestine and Afghanistan, marking these as critical points for further attention.

A closer look at these topics reveals a clear emphasis on the role of the OTS in protecting Turkic world values and supporting its interests on the international stage. Concerning the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, a long-standing priority on the international agenda, member states expressed “deep concern about the devastating humanitarian situation, condemned the targeting of civilians indiscriminately, and called for an urgent and lasting ceasefire in full compliance with international law, including relevant UN Security Council resolutions, as well as for unhindered humanitarian aid to be delivered to Gaza”. The members also called for “a fair and lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution”. Furthermore, the statement highlighted their support for “the international recognition of an independent, sovereign, and contiguous Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on pre-1967 borders, and welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution dated May 10, 2024, affirming that Palestine qualifies for UN membership and therefore should be accepted”. Similarly, regarding Lebanon – a country directly affected by the tensions in Gaza – the OTS highlighted the “importance of an immediate ceasefire and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006)” (OTS, 2024). Lastly, the topic of Afghanistan, mostly addressed alongside broader Central Asian security issues, was included in the OTS foreign policy agenda for the first time with a decision to establish a working group dedicated to this matter.

On the other hand, leveraging Hungary’s Presidency of the European Union Council, relations between the OTS and the European Union were institutionalized further at the Bishkek Summit through the establishment of a Joint Working Plan. This new phase initiated with the European Union, along

with the OTS's initiative to hold a joint summit with the African Union, indicates that the organization aims to take on a more active role in global affairs.

In addition to the summit's notable themes, it is also fitting to address recent developments in economic integration within the Turkic world, driven by the motto of a digital and green economy. The focus on green finance and digital economy demonstrates the OTS's efforts to shape regional economic cooperation through next-generation technologies and environmental sustainability. The establishment of the Turkic Green Finance Council and the signing of the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) reflect the member countries' commitment to expanding economic cooperation (OTS, 2024). Another significant economic initiative of the Bishkek Summit was the launch of the Turkic World Investment Forum, a platform aimed at enhancing the investment potential of member countries and attracting foreign direct investment to the region. Kazakhstan's TURANSEZ special economic zone project further represents an initiative to place the OTS's economic integration efforts on a more concrete and long-term foundation. Collectively, these initiatives are vital steps toward strengthening regional economic stability and positioning Central Asia as a hub for trade within the Eurasian region.

In summary, the Bishkek Summit provides valuable insights into the policies the OTS is expected to pursue in the future. In the coming period, the OTS is likely to focus on digital economy, green finance, the preservation and development of common identity, and a taking on more proactive role in global politics. The OTS will continue its mission of ensuring peace and security in Central Asia, taking steps to promote stability in partnership with all relevant parties, based on economic development and prosperity. Moreover, stronger security cooperation among member states is expected to be established to address modern security threats such as cybersecurity and disinformation. In the field of economic cooperation, initiatives like TURANSEZ are expected to advance, further enhancing regional connectivity and facilitating trade. Progress in energy, logistics, and financial integration will bolster the Turkic world's economic power and enable it to achieve a more prominent role in the global economy.

Ultimately, the Bishkek Summit has strengthened the institutional identity of the OTS and marked significant steps in its journey toward becoming a regional and global power. The decisions made reflect a commitment to act in solidarity in the face of new opportunities and challenges encountered by the Turkic world. Considering that new surprise decisions have become a tradition with each new presidency of the OTS, it is hoped that during Azerbaijan's chairmanship, starting in November 2025 – coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the First Turkology Congress in Baku in 1926 – the long-awaited Turkic States Common Alphabet will be officially adopted.

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