

Transport and transit sector – a strategic direction of cooperation between the OTS countries



Today, the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) has become a completely new format of multilateral cooperation, possessing unique opportunities to unite the members of the Organization around common interests and joint initiatives, and to form a solid political, economic, and legal foundation for mutual cooperation.

Currently, the member states of the Organization are actively cooperating in more than 40 areas, such as trade, transport, energy, digital integration, environmental protection, space research, artificial intelligence.

In this place, the transport sector is being formed as an important pillar of the architecture of multilateral cooperation of the Turkic countries. The continuous and efficient operation of the transport and transit flow between the OTS member countries also contributes to the development of trade and economic relations.

In turn, the implementation of joint projects on the development of interregional transport-transit corridors and the creation of modern logistics infrastructure has become one of the main strategic directions of cooperation within the OTS. This trend is evident in the following processes.

Firstly, today we are all witnessing the strengthening and further expansion of the conceptual and legal basis of transport cooperation within the framework of the OTS.

The adoption of important strategic documents such as the «Turkic World Vision 2040» and the «OTS Strategy for 2022-2026» determined the main directions of cooperation within the Organization in the near future in a cross-sectoral manner. These documents recognized the development of multilateral cooperation in the field of transport between the OTS member states as an important strategic task.

The most significant agreements reached in the field of transport are «Agreement on International Combined Freight Transport among the Governments of the Member States of the Organization of Turkic States» and the «Transport Connectivity Program of the Organization of Turkic States», signed at the Samarkand Summit of the OTS on November 11, 2022. These documents, adopted with a view to cooperation in the near future, began a new era of bilateral and multilateral agreements on transport

cooperation between the Turkic countries.

Secondly, within the framework of the OTS, special dialogue formats and institutional structures are also operating to establish systematic and effective cooperation in the transport sector.

In particular, meetings of the Ministers of Transport of the Organization's member countries are held annually. They determine important tasks and a plan of practical actions aimed at ensuring interconnection in the transport and communications sector, further strengthening transit relations between the member countries of the structure.

Since 2022, meetings of the Heads of railway administrations of the OTS member countries have been held annually. During these meetings, promising projects for mutual cooperation aimed at improving multilateral relations in the transport and transit sector, further optimizing interregional routes, and expanding transport and logistics capabilities are being considered.

In 2024, the Alliance of Logistics Centers and Cargo Carriers of the Organization of Turkic States was established in Tashkent. The Alliance unites legal entities and individuals engaged in logistics and freight transportation, engineering work, and consulting services. This event was an important step in the development of logistics infrastructure and further strengthening of cooperation in the field of transport between OTS member countries.

Thirdly, the transport infrastructure of the Turkic countries, which is developing year by year and the rapidly integrating transport system, provides the OTS countries with valuable opportunities to enter the markets of neighboring regions such as Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and Africa.

This, in turn, further increases the potential of the OTS region, located at the crossroads of strategic transport routes in Eurasia, to become an important transport and logistics link in the global production and supply chain.

In particular, within the framework of the Organization, special attention is currently being paid to the joint development of the «Middle Corridor», which connects the Asian region with Europe through Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The volume of cargo transportation through this international corridor is expected to reach 4,5 million tons in 2024, an increase of almost 6 times compared to 2020.

In addition, the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway and its integration with other promising transport projects in the OTS area will significantly strengthen the land route between the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and China to Europe. It is worth noting that this corridor previously passed through the territory of the Turkic states and served to develop trade, economic and cultural exchanges between the countries. At the same time, the creation of the Trans-Afghan corridor also provides significant opportunities, allowing the OTS countries to access the markets of South Asia, which has a population of almost 1,9 billion and a total GDP of \$ 3,5 trillion.

From the first days of its accession to the Turkic States Organization as a full member in 2019, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been making an invaluable contribution to the creation of a strong and effective transport and logistics system and ensuring connectivity in the OTS space.

Undoubtedly, the further qualitative expansion of the OTS general agenda, including cooperation in the transport sector, was largely due to the active efforts and initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to strengthen multilateral ties.

In particular, in his speech at the summit of the Turkic States Organization held in Turkey in 2021, the President of Uzbekistan drew attention to the need to establish cooperation in the transport and transit sectors on a systematic basis. In order to fully utilize the existing potential of cooperation in these areas, the Head of our country put forward the initiative to develop the «Transport Connectivity Program of the Turkic States Organization».

Within the framework of the 2022 Samarkand Summit, the Leader of Uzbekistan proposed the development of multimodal transport routes and transport services in this region. In this regard, measures were taken to introduce modern digital solutions to customs processes («e-TIR», «e-Permit» and «e-CMR»), as well as to liberalize transit regimes and simplify administrative procedures.

Also, in 2022, the logistics centers of Uzbekistan «Universal Logistics Service» (Tashkent), «Akhtachi» (Andijan) and «Termez Cargo Centre» (Surkhandarya) joined the OTS's «Brother Ports» process.

At the 2023 OTS's Astana Summit, the Head of State once again emphasized the urgency of the issues of developing and diversifying global logistics chains and transport corridors, and forming a single transit network.

In this regard, measures were supported to expand the potential of the «Middle Corridor», develop additional multi-sector routes, including international corridors to the markets of China, South Asia and Europe through our countries, and digitize transport services. In this context, it was proposed to establish the Council of the Heads of railway administrations of the OTS member countries and locate the directorate of this structure in Uzbekistan.

At the summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Bishkek in November 2024, the President of Uzbekistan identified the effective use of transport corridors, optimization of transit tariffs on the «Middle Corridor», simplification of border crossing processes, creation of modern logistics systems and joint operators as another priority issue. Within the framework of the Organization, an initiative was put forward to sign a multilateral agreement on the transition to electronic document circulation in freight transport and their mutual recognition.

At the informal summit of the OTS in Hungary in May 2025, in order to ensure the growth of cargo transportation volumes through the Trans-Caspian international corridor and simplify customs and border procedures, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev called for the rapid introduction of a «single window» and «green corridors» system along this route.

At the Gabala Summit of the TBT held in November of this year, the Leader of our country supported the plans for the consistent development of the «Middle Corridor», emphasizing the importance of ensuring the competitiveness of this route and creating the most favorable conditions for the business community.

In this regard, the importance of applying reasonable transit tariffs, developing modern transport infrastructure, and introducing digital customs procedures was noted. The fact that the «Middle Corridor», when connected with the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway under construction and the promising Trans-Afghan corridor, will become the basis for creating a system of multi-sectoral, strategic highways in the vast region was once again highlighted.

It should be emphasized that the proposals and initiatives of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to strengthen cooperation within the framework of the OTS in all promising areas, including in the transport sector, in every way contribute to the integration of our country into regional and global transport and transit systems, the expansion of economic ties with Turkic countries, as well as the increase in international investment flows.

From this point of view, against the background of rapid changes in today's world politics and economy, the importance of regional cooperation is increasing more than ever. In this regard, the current period of development and activities of the OTS demonstrate the relevance of this organization, as well as the effectiveness of its aspirations and actions to increase the general economic, transport, cultural and social potential of the Turkic states.

In this regard, the The International Forum on Multimodal Transportation, which is currently being held in Tashkent at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, provides new opportunities for regional development, for increasing the general transport and transit potential in the OTS region, and serves as a

practical continuation of efforts in this regard.

Sarvar Kamolov,
the Chief Research Fellow of the ISRS under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan