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TURKEY-RUSSIA RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

Current Dynamics - Future Prospects

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC RESEARCH ORGANIZATION
USAK Center for Eurasian Studies

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July 2013

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	7
Introduction.....	15
I. FOREIGN POLICY.....	19
1. Turkey-Russia Relations During the 1990s: Legacies of the Cold War in the Transition Period.....	20
2. Turkey-Russia Relations During the 2000s: Trust Building & Potential Partnership	21
2. 1 Iraq War & 1 March Bill	21
2. 2 Russia-Georgia War.....	22
3. Current Dynamics.....	22
4. Opportunities and Challenges to be Addressed	24
4. 1 The Caucasus and Central Asia	24
4. 2 The Black Sea Region as an Area of Cooperation	25
4. 3 Afghanistan.....	26
4. 4 Syria: Both Challenge and Opportunity	27
4. 4. 1 Syria as Imagined by Russia and Turkey.....	28
5. Future Perspectives: Opportunities and Challenges.....	30
5. 1 Syria.....	30
5. 2 NATO.....	31
5. 3 Extremism.....	32
II. ECONOMY	35
1. Bilateral Trade.....	35
2. Economic Cooperation and Investment.....	41
3. Institutional Mechanisms between Russia and Turkey.....	44
3. 1 The Joint Economic Commission	44
3. 2 High Level Cooperation Council	45
4. Energy	47
4. 1 Natural Gas.....	48
4. 2 Oil	50
4. 3 Nuclear Energy.....	52
III. SOCIAL RELATIONS	55
1. Tourism.....	55
1. 1 Deepening Relations with Mutual Visits	56
1. 2 Diversification of Transportation.....	58
1. 3 Fragile Aspects and Possible Cooperation Areas	61
2. Education	62
2. 1 Field Studies.....	62
2. 2 Student and Personnel Exchange	63
3. Culture	65
3. 1 Civil Society	65
3. 2 International Marriages	66
APPENDIX	67

Tables and Graphs

Table 1.	High-Level Official Visits between Turkey and Russia (2000-2012)	23
Table 2.	Structure of Turkey's Foreign Trade with Russia (million \$).....	38
Table 3.	Main Product Groups in Turkey's Export to Russia (million \$)	39
Table 4.	Main Product Groups in Turkey's Import to Russia (million \$).....	40
Table 5.	Meetings of Joint Economic Commission	44
Table 6.	The Numbers of Incoming Visitors to Turkey from Russia by Year.....	55
Table 7.	The Numbers of Incoming Visitors to Russia from Turkey by Year.....	58
Graph 1.	GDP Growth of Turkey and the Russian Federation (1989-2011)	36
Graph 2.	Turkey-Russia Trade Volume (1996-2012)	37
Graph 3.	Share in Trade Volume between Russia and Turkey (1996-2012)	38
Graph 4.	Turkey's Top Foreign Trading Partners.....	42
Graph 5.	Russia's Top Foreign Trading Partners.....	43
Graph 6.	Russian Natural Gas Production and Consumption (1992-2011)	48
Graph 7.	Russian Natural Gas Export and Import (1992-2011)	48
Graph 8.	Turkey's Natural Gas Consumption (1992-2011)	49
Graph 9.	Gazprom's Natural Gas Export to Europe (bcm)	49
Graph 10.	Turkey's Oil Import in 2012 (thousand tons).....	51
Graph 11.	The First Destinations of Russian Visitors Coming to Turkey in 2012	60

USAK CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES

Abundant natural resources, rapidly changing power structures, enduring conflicts, and exceptional levels of foreign interest and influence are all traits of the vast expanse of land extending from the Baltic and Black Seas east to the Pacific Ocean.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Foreign Policy

- Turkey and Russia have succeeded in developing a constructive dialogue since the Cold War era. The roots of this dialogue go back to the 1920s. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, throughout the Turkish War for Independence and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, and up until 1936 the two countries had cooperated in several areas. During the Cold War, Turkey and Russia (in the form of the USSR) were in opposite blocs, but being located in the same geography, both countries found various ways to keep dialogue channels open.
- Bilateral relations have gained a particular momentum in the 21st century as the two countries left behind their terrorism-related security concerns. Political will in Ankara and Moscow further contributed to the deepening of relations. The relations developed rapidly in the economic sphere and the parties succeeded in creating institutional mechanisms like the High-Level Cooperation Council, the Civic Forum, and the Joint Strategic Forum while consolidating the role of the Joint Economic Commission.
- Even though relations are prospering at the bilateral level, cooperation between the countries on regional issues has been relatively limited. Turkey and Russia have recently started to discuss regional developments at different levels. The two countries generally respect each other's positions and this understanding helps to compartmentalize their relations. In other words, Turkey and Russia can continue to seek ways to cooperate in different areas even though their positions may differ on certain regional problems.
- There are rising threats and challenges in the neighborhoods adjacent to Turkey and Russia which will require cooperation rather than competition. Formulating problem-solving capacities for different crises will pave the way for a strategic partnership between the two countries. Currently, the main challenges are Syria, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and extremism.

Syria

- As the Syrian conflict has been going on for more than two years there is a great potential for Syria to become a failed state. The country has become more exposed to the influences of radical groups and gangs as the crumbling state cannot prevent their

entry. The international community is concerned that in the case of regime change the inflow of weapons will threaten the transition and rebuilding period. As different groups gain control, predictions are rampant about the country fragmenting.

- So far, four car bombs originating in Syria have targeted civilians in Turkey. The last one took 53 lives in the Reyhanlı district of Hatay. Moreover, mortar shells falling on Turkish territory have added to deepening security concerns. Considering the destabilizing nature of the Syrian conflict, there is a risk that gaps in security will turn into permanent risks in the region and exacerbate instability in the Middle East.
- Russia considers Syria one of its main strongholds in the Middle East and is concerned about the dynamics of the Arab popular movements in the region. Russia's main concerns are the possible radicalization of the region and the challenges to the international principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Human rights violations are severe in Syria. According to UN statistics, more than 93.000 people have lost their lives due to the clashes. An estimated five million are internally-displaced. An additional million Syrians have left their country and are living in camps in Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon.
- Considering the humanitarian and security concerns, the priority should be to find a way to stop the ongoing conflict in Syria. Nevertheless, the most crucial process will be in the post-conflict period, which makes the dialogue about the transitional period all the more important. As the Assad government has difficulty controlling the entire country, the possibility of the fall of the regime in the long run or Syria's turning into a failed state is hard to ignore. In this regard, Russia and Turkey should focus on a solution to end the conflict and work on a post-conflict roadmap to reconstruct Syria's infrastructure and institutions.

Afghanistan

- Afghanistan is a potential area of cooperation for Turkey and Russia. NATO has declared that it will pull its forces out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Considering the influence of the Taliban and the fragility of state institutions, it's likely that a power vacuum will follow the withdrawal of the coalition forces and destabilize the country.
- An unstable Afghanistan would have the potential to destabilize the whole Central Asian region. Ankara and Moscow can cooperate by using their relationships with regional countries and the international community to keep all parties involved in the preservation of stability. Therefore a Turkish-Russian joint initiative to plan for Afghanistan's post-withdrawal period is an urgent necessity.

Caucasus and Central Asia

- The Caucasus is a strategic region for both Turkey and Russia in terms of security and economic concerns. In this sense, both countries should cooperate to promote trust-building measures in the region and open dialogue that fosters a constructive atmosphere.

- The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict concerns the whole Caucasus region as the parties continue to accumulate weapons, increase their defense budgets, and engage in low-intensity skirmishes. In this context, the primary mission of Turkey and Russia should be to reduce tension and reconcile the conflict. Russia and Turkey have genuine and deep interests in a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Russia is highly aware that a war would lead to a very difficult situation for both sides.
- Central Asia is a region where Moscow and Ankara are perceived as competitors. However, Russian-Turkish collaboration in the region would have a great potential to work towards regional stability. In this context, Russia and Turkey can develop capacity-building programs to consolidate existing institutions. This will be an important step to avoiding any chaos that might emerge during financial or political crises.

Extremism

- Radicalism, extremism, and xenophobia are important threats to individual freedom and state sovereignty in the 21st century. The rise of radical groups and asymmetric threats in connection with these phenomena are new global challenges.
- Turkey and Russia should establish a real bridge between each other to address extremism and radicalism immediately. However, caution must be taken not to link radicalism with any religion or ethnic group.
- The massacre in Norway carried out by Anders Breivik shows that the connection that has been made between Islam and extremism is not meaningful, as extremism has no particular religion or ethnicity but is a matter and concern for the whole modern world. Extremism is a destructive mentality that does not respect the right of all to live and be different. There should be certain frames to avoid certain prejudices that would push different groups and ideologies to radicalism. Instead of isolation there is a need to foster communication and cooperation.
- Turkey and Russia cooperating against extremism would be productive as both countries have a certain level of accumulated experience with this threat. For such cooperation, first a common discourse and a common perspective need to be framed.

Security

- Turkey can play a role in developing NATO-Russia dialogue from its basis in the NATO-Russia Council.
- Both countries' Ministries of Interior Affairs signed an agreement for cooperation in 2010. Moreover, there is a memorandum of understanding to combat drug smuggling and illegal trafficking. To make these agreements functional there is a need for common personnel training and communication programs for security forces like the police and the gendarmerie. Moreover, these programs could be open to personnel from the Central Asian and Caucasian states as well. This is a way for Turkey and Russia to work together with the Central Asian republics to build their capacities.

Economy and Energy

- The volume of bilateral trade is \$40 billion, still far from the target of \$100 billion. The countries should focus on different areas of cooperation and deepen existing ones. Looking at the overall picture, it can be argued that the Russian and Turkish economies are complimentary and this aids efforts to diversify economic relations. Moreover, Turkish-Russian consortiums would serve this aim.
- There is also a need to diversify the locations of investments and economic operations. Russia's recent openings in Turkey's financial and telecommunication sectors are promising examples. Moreover, Turkish entrepreneurs' investments outside of the Moscow region and in the eastern part of the country are important developments. Yet, these efforts are still insufficient.
- Discovering new geographies, cities, and districts in Russia and Turkey may lead to greater diversity in economic activities. The Turkish Parliament passed the "New Investment Incentives Program" in 2012 offering many advantages to potential investors. Russia's Siberia, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Krasnodar regions in Russia are developing rapidly along with Russia's general economic growth. Entrepreneurs should seek new strategies, and under-explored geographies to take advantage of these developments.
- There are many potential sectors for Russian and Turkish entrepreneurs to invest in different sectors other than construction and tourism. The innovation technologies sector is an opportunity considering Russia and Turkey's rising interests in the IT sector along with the sectors' global potential.
- There is a need to stimulate dialogue between business circles and other groups along with the inter-state relations. This dialogue is not necessarily limited to large-scale companies. Considering Turkey's advantage in small and medium-scale companies, efforts should be made to bring them into the dialogue as well.
- Another area that the parties can work on to stimulate bilateral trade is the ease of mobility between the countries. As of the last quarter of 2009, both sides had started to implement a "Simplified Customs Line" (SCL), which is an electronic system that helps complete customs transactions faster. The main aim is to increase the trade between the two countries by decreasing the two to three months of waiting time at customs gates. Additionally, the SCL will reduce the shadow economy in foreign trade. It is estimated that shuttle trade in the new system will raise Turkish exports from \$6-\$7 billion to \$15-\$20 billion in a couple of years. After full implementation, the SCL system should be continuously streamlined.
- Energy is the engine of Turkey-Russia bilateral relations. Currently, Russia supplies 55-60 percent of Turkey's natural gas needs. It is one of Turkey's top three oil suppliers and it is building Turkey's first nuclear power plant. In this regard, energy relations have diversified very quickly in the last 30 years.

- The agreement signed on 10 March 2011 includes a legal framework to deepen energy cooperation. There are serious advances like contract handovers from state-owned Botaş to the private sector, as well as Çalık and Rosneft cooperating in the oil sector. Moreover, Lukoil's entrance into the retail market is another advantage. Working further on this area, the parties might expand the level of cooperation in different levels.
- The bilateral hydrocarbon energy trade is now at the multi-billion dollar level. However, it is still mainly limited to a supply-demand relationship within Turkish borders. Recently a new initiative has started between Turkish and Russian companies. But there is a need to diversify it in global scale. There is room for Turkish and Russian companies to cooperate in technique sharing and collaboration in different projects- particularly in the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea region, and in Africa.
- Turkey has shown the political will to promote Turkish energy companies abroad. Moreover, Turkish entrepreneurs have started to invest more in the energy sector after the steps have been taken to liberalize it.
- Even though both countries have diverging strategies in some energy-related subjects, bilateral relations are based on trust and respect. In this regard, Russia is Turkey's main energy supplier and is predicted to maintain its status in the long run. On the other hand, Turkey is not obstructing Russian interests in the Black Sea region. Turkey's permission to Russia to build the South Stream Natural Gas Pipeline within its economic exclusive zone is an important gesture.
- Nuclear power plant construction in Mersin-Akkuyu is the next big project in bilateral energy relations. Finalizing the project on time serves the interests of both countries. Considering Turkey's increasing electricity consumption, the project is perceived as an important gain in the energy sector. Moreover, it is a sound investment for Russia, as Turkey is committed to buying the electricity produced in the power plant. Building a high-tech facility in a European country is also a public relations coup for Russian Rosatom.

Tourism

- It is likely that Turkey will remain the most popular destination for Russian tourist in the near future. However, Turkish and Russian entrepreneurs should take advantage of this attention by broadening touristic activities, like developing culture tours or package programs along with the conventional combination of sea, sand, and sun.
- The interaction of Turks and Russians outside of five-star hotels will serve to consolidate trust and closeness between their societies. Possibilities include cultural tours and festivals, convention tourism, educational trips and orientation programs, introductory visits that will acquaint Turkish and Russian families, and art events that Russian culture values, such as ballet, opera, theatre, piano, cinema, and others.

- The Turkish private sector and the state agencies should work with their Russian counterparts to effectively advertise Turkey across Russia. They should shape agendas with some positive comments on the blogs and social media that Russians frequently follow. Russian women's strong position in the Russian society should be kept in mind while shaping this strategy.
- The Russian policy of putting quota restrictions on large airline companies and keeping the number of destinations limited stands out as an important issue that Turkish authorities should work on. As a matter of fact, increasing the number of flights and destinations is already a necessity to advance bilateral relations.
- Regarding the visa-free regime, Turkey increased the duration of stay in the country from 30 days to 60 days out of goodwill. Russia can do the same to ease travel between the two countries. As the two nations approach each other, there is a need for long-term cooperation in different areas like education, science, and business.
- It is also necessary for Turkish authorities to increase security and safety measures, particularly on the issues of food and beverage regulation, traffic, and facility safety. Communication and cooperation between national authorities, and between authorities and media should be strengthened to deal with any unfortunate incidents involving foreign visitors.

Education

- Cooperation in education is a critical area that would create the necessary human capital to open channels and stimulate the existing dialogue between the two countries. Moreover, this is an area where parties can easily support and control the activities of institutions through official mechanisms.
- There is very limited academic literature -particularly on contemporary issues- on Turkey-Russia bilateral relations. A series of edited books authored by Russian and Turkish academics could help fill the gap.
- For a long time both parties have been talking about opening Turkish and Russian universities to each other to boost cultural and professional ties. These plans, if realized, will serve bilateral interests in the long run.
- The Russian Diaspora in Turkey has some advantages, but this is still not sufficient as the number of international marriages is increasing along with the number of Russians living in Turkey. The International Private Russian School founded by the Russians living in Antalya, together with its affiliate Tourism Vocational High School, has a similar curriculum to those in Russia and the medium of instruction is the Russian language. Turkish and English are taught as foreign languages. The school contributes to bilateral relations and helps Russians living in Antalya overcome their adaptation problems and feel more at home. Conversely, even though there are thousands of Turkish people living in Moscow, there are no schools where the medium of instruction is Turkish.

- Turkey should give priority to the development of Slavic and Russian studies in Turkey, where it considerably lags behind Turcology in Russia.
- A need for academics with expertise on recent Russia-Turkey relations has emerged, as both countries have experienced a fast economic, political, and social transformation over the last ten years. Academic personnel exchanges would be a good start. However, there is also a need to raise funds to finance their research and stays abroad. These people may study history and culture, but also contemporary issues. In this way they may become go-to experts on these two countries.
- Negotiations over a “privileged partnership” include university exchange programs and efforts to increase the number of visiting students. Moreover, the cooperation between universities should be handled in a more effective, professional, and goal-oriented way. That the cooperation on the nuclear issues spilled over into education is a good example for the future.
- The Russian language has recently gained popularity in Turkey. There are some departments of Russian language and education and some courses offered by several universities. Yet, these efforts are not sufficient to meet the increasing need. In this regard, Turkish universities and institutions of higher education can develop programs that will serve Russian language education needs with the collaboration of Russian institutes.
- Activities like Russian language competitions can be organized to reward successful students and attract interest in the language.
- There is a need for platforms that will bring together Russian and Turkish academics and intellectuals. In this regard, governments could support conferences and workshops, which would become self-sustainable in the long run. Based on this idea, conferences and workshops might be held alternately in Russia and Turkey on different topics like social sciences, engineering, agriculture, and so on.

Culture

- Interaction and cooperation between Turkey and Russia proceeds faster at the societal and individual level than through official channels, which are burdened with certain protocols and bureaucratic obstacles. The dialogue between the two societies is thus far ahead of the dialogue between two states. This critical advantage allows relations to prosper via “track-two” mechanisms- alternative, non-binding channels for communicating about opportunities and challenges anytime.
- The Civic Forum and the cultural centers will close a significant gap in this field. However, when Russia’s gigantic geography is taken into consideration, cultural centers should be strategically located. Besides, it is also important for the institutions to develop projects that can bring the two societies closer. Showing similarities and common motifs in each nation’s culture will promote rapprochement. In this regard,

the roles of the Yunus Emre Institute and Russkiy Mir Center (along with other civil society organizations) are really critical, but there is a need to increase their activities and visibility.

- It is important for cultural centers and institutions to create joint projects, and share their experiences with each other rather than competing.
- The number of Russians with Turkish citizenship and the right to stay in Turkey is steadily increasing. In this respect, Turkish authorities should put support for Russian cultural associations and institutions on the agenda so that Russians can adapt more easily to life in Turkey.
- It is estimated that the number of Turkish-Russian marriages has exceeded 80,000 and is also rising unabatedly. When one thinks about the children of these families, it is also important to consider new diasporas in both countries. Given diasporas' abilities to strengthen bilateral relations, it is vital to help them to adapt to their host societies in a more efficient and active way.
- It is a significant development that Russians have begun discovering Turkish TV series and films. Joint projects in the cinema sector will accelerate cultural rapprochement between the two societies in the near future.
- There are some exchange programs or short-term education seminars in different countries about the media sector, particularly journalism. Journalist exchange programs between Turkey and Russia would foster understanding among journalists and give them foreign contacts to provide accurate information about their respective countries.

INTRODUCTION

Russia-Turkey relations have witnessed a tremendous change in the last three decades. Throughout this time so many structural changes have happened at the national level and international system. These changes have eliminated barriers at the bilateral level and brought new dynamics to their dialogue.

Following the military coup in 12 September 1980, Ankara and Moscow agreed to stimulate their economic relations by starting a barter-style trade regime. The natural gas agreement in 1984 became the backbone of this relationship and opened the Russian market to Turkish entrepreneurs. When the Berlin Wall collapsed and the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, Turkey was in Russia with its economic actors already. Thus, it was relatively easy for Turkey to advance compared to many other actors who were still trying to understand the dynamics of the Russian market. At the same time, Russians started coming to Turkey and returning with consumer goods to sell in their own country. During this period the link between İstanbul bazaars and Moscow markets started to be more vibrant. Turkey became one of the main destinations for Russians who were looking for new products to satisfy the needs of a rapidly transforming Russian economy.

Parallel to the suspension of ideological barriers and rapidly growing mobility in the economic sphere, we saw a momentum built in other areas in 1990s. Among these were international marriages between Turkish and Russian citizens, tourism, shuttle trade, Turkish contractors in Russia, and increasing governmental interactions.

During this period negative perceptions Russians and Turks harbored towards each other started turn into positive ones. The third breakthrough came in the 2000s. Political administrations in both countries stabilized and fragilities started to turn into strengths. Bilateral cooperation got the support of new institutions and dialogue mechanisms like the High Level Cooperation Council, Joint Strategic Planning Group and Civic Council. Apart from this, two states decided to start a visa-free regime in 2010.

The international system has become more colorful since 1991. The dissolution of the USSR brought ended the bipolar system of the Cold War and the international system slid toward uni-polarity. However, following the 9/11, the rise of asymmetric

threats, the Bush administration's unilateral steps and the emergence of new regional power centers, multi-polarity has now taken precedence in the international discourse. Regional powers and regional cooperation gained more power as American dominance declined. International dynamics continue to foster more chaos; the current situation in the Middle East following the Arab popular movements, the global economy's position after the 2008 financial crisis, and rise of new actors known as BRICS have all reformed the international system. This continuous systemic change brings new opportunities along with new challenges for Turkey and Russia at the regional and global scale.

Under these circumstances, in the new era bilateral relations between Russia and Turkey have the potential to evolve in three different aspects. According to the General Director of the Russian Council, Andrei Kortunov, these are “collaborative actions”, “functional aspects”, and “existential issues”.¹ In collaborative actions one can talk about Russian-Turkish interaction responding to emerging threats. In this respect, interaction should focus on damage control in line with the national interests of both countries. Secondly, the functional aspect of relations focuses more on bilateral and regional-level cooperation, where these two states have the potential to change the existing parameters for their interests in political and economic sphere. This is mostly related to advancing existing relations one step further in the economic, political and social realms. Last but not least, existential issues imply the cooperation in the areas where one country perceives an issue as existential for itself and seeks the support of the other. As in the case of the Sochi 2014 Olympics or the Caucasus, both countries might seek the support of the other to better handle the issue.

The dynamics favor success in Turkey-Russian multilevel cooperation. The relations at the state level have resisted the side effects of the regional crises on bilateral relations, and both countries have succeeded in compartmentalizing their relations in different areas. Also, social dynamics are developing rapidly and playing a catalyzing role. In the period ahead, one of the main necessary requirements is dialogue that continues to shed light on new challenges and opportunities. In this regard, both countries might take advantage of “track-two” diplomacy to discuss the issues at an unofficial level and to share their projections and concerns regarding the future and the current dynamics. This might support the official efforts and open a new chapter at the social level.

This report is the result of months of comprehensive research, including high level interviews, field studies in Ankara and Moscow, the contents of 50 years of archived Official Gazette records, and official statistics on bilateral relations. Besides, the joint International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) - Institute of the Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOS) workshop on* “Turkey-Russia Relations” was held in Ankara on 19 February 2013 which brought Turkish and Russian academics, bureaucrats, and decision makers together. Contributions and policy proposals that have been argued during the workshop are also reflected to the report.

* Participants of the USAK-IOS workshop on “Turkey-Russia Relations”: Alexey Malashenko, Andrei Kortunov, Fyodor Lukyanov, Güner Özkan, Habibe Özdal, Hasan Selim Özerterem, Hüseyin Bağcı, İlter Turan, Kamer Kasım, Kerim Has, M. Turgut Demirtepe, Mitat Çelikpala, Pavel Shlykov, Petr Stegny, Ramazan Daurov, Selçuk Çolakoglu, Sönmez Köksal.

The report tries to cover these issues in three different chapters. In the first chapter, the report focuses on the political aspects of relations and tries to explain how relations have developed over the last 20 years, what the main challenges and turning points have been that helped establish the vibrant bilateral dialogue, and what areas still need to be addressed.

In the second part of the report current economic dynamics are analyzed with a specific emphasis on energy and institutional mechanisms between the two countries. Both countries have embraced the target of a bilateral trade volume of \$100 billion. This section argues that there is a need to diversify economic cooperation into different sectors. Moreover, the two countries should focus on regional cooperation in emerging markets with private Turkish-Russian consortiums.

The last section of the report focuses on the social aspect of the relations. The current and potential dynamics of tourism, education, and culture are analyzed. It is shown that the social relations have outperformed political relations. However, there is a need to focus on the state's stimulating role in this area, as we saw its positive impacts in the economic sphere.

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1

FOREIGN POLICY

Turkey-Russia relations have historically been based on rivalry and great wars, but a rapid transformation process is now pulling the two countries toward friendship and cooperation.

The history of Turkish-Russian relations is over five centuries long. Ups and downs in relations over the span of five centuries are as inevitable for these countries as it is for any other two neighbors. Along with these memories, their opposition during the Cold War contributed to each country viewing the other primarily as a threat. However, circumstances have led to stretches of warm bilateral relations as well. For instance, the Soviet Union and the Turkish Republic cooperated intensely between 1923 and 1936.² Additionally, Turkish foreign policy achieved a major breakthrough after the Johnson Letter and the Jupiter Missile Crisis by establishing a closer relationship with the USSR to balance its then strained relationship with the U.S.³

However, the above-mentioned instances of bilateral convergence were very limited during the Cold War. Turkish-Russian relations have changed significantly in line with the tremendous change in the international system following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Booming economic ties have paved the way for renewed political relations. Each country has the urge to re-define each other's role not only within the international system but also within the regional context. During the Cold War, Russia perceived Turkey as a proxy of the West. Conversely, Turkey perceived Russia as a dire threat. But this did not isolate the two nations from each other and the relations continued to develop in a controlled manner. Things started to change dramatically with the post-Cold War era because of several reasons related to rapidly improving economic relations and a transforming international political context.

Within the foreign policy chapter that evaluates the political context of relations there are four sections. After a brief focus on the 1990s, the report examines the 2000s with special emphasis on the factors that moved the countries to normalize relations in the second part. In the third section, the report sheds light on the current regional challenges affecting Turkey and Russia. And in the final section the report discusses future challenges and opportunities for Russia and Turkey, and focuses on issues like NATO, Syria, and extremism.

1. Turkey-Russia Relations During the 1990s: Legacies of the Cold War in the Transition Period

Evaluating contemporary relations between Turkey and Russia requires a comparative analysis of relations during the 1990s and 2000s, not only because the dissolution of the USSR was the precursor to new bilateral relations, but also because regional and global developments as well as domestic changes had significant effects. Russia's economic and political transformation, along with the turmoil in Turkish domestic politics restricted the realization of the potential of bilateral relations during the 1990s.⁴

According to Vitaly Naumkin, Director of Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian diplomacy during the 1990s was strictly motivated by pragmatic and economic considerations. Although Russia felt vulnerable after the collapse of the Soviet Union, few Russians harbored imperialistic desires. During the 1990s Russia worried about excessive military activity in the Black Sea which some Russian nationalists scornfully called a "NATO lake". Moscow was also concerned on Turkey's diplomatic and economic relations with the Turkic republics.⁵

Indeed, regional rivalry between Russia and Turkey has put limits on opportunities for cooperation. The USSR's dissolution immediately posed a critical question: who will fill the regional power vacuum? In addition to the regional power struggle, separatist movements within both countries also increased threat perceptions and dominated the security agenda after the Cold War. Chechen rebels and the PKK had separatist ambitions in Russia and Turkey, respectively, and both movements took foreign aid.

Despite the Cold War ending, both sides still continued with the old paradigm of mutual tensions, conflict and rivalry, during the 1990s. Specifically, Ankara and Moscow seemed to have long-term irreconcilable differences over the Caucasus and the Black Sea basin.

It seems that apart from the rivalry and areas of conflict, political relations still continued during the first decade after the Cold War: the two countries signed the Treaty on Principles of Friendship and Cooperation on 25 May, 1992. The Treaty formed the legal basis for the countries' relations with each other, and attempted to provide a strategic framework to continuously develop bilateral relations. Moreover, during the first six months of 1992, the Turkish and Russian foreign ministers hosted each other in turn. The Turkish president and prime minister had visited Moscow four more times by 1996. Such diplomatic traffic in a short period contrasts sharply with the preceding 45 years of the Cold War. The high-level diplomatic traffic was not fruitless, either. 15 agreements and protocols were signed between Russia and Turkey during the relatively brief period between 1992 and 1996 covering issues such as scientific, technical, educational, cultural, military, and economic cooperation.⁶ Still, the PKK problem and the conflict in Chechnya prevented a healthy dialogue from taking root.

At the end of 1990s, Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit announced that Turkey would extradite a Chechen terrorist to Russia for the first time. Similarly, Russia closed down the office of the PKK terrorist organization in Moscow, and refused to host PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in the country when he sought refuge in 1999. During Prime Minister Ecevit's visit to Moscow in 1999, Russian President Putin declared that "regardless of their origins, Russia never supported, and will not support in the future, terrorism against Turkey". Turkey expressed its support for Russia's efforts to re-establish order in Chechnya. Turkey also took the initiative to combat terrorism at a regional level, especially in the Caucasus, which is parallel to Russia's concerns over terrorism in this region.⁷

2. Turkey-Russia Relations During the 2000s: Trust Building & Potential Partnership

It was only in the 2000s that the zero-sum mentality that had characterized Turkey-Russia relations for so long was finally shed. Thanks to both governments' initiatives and booming bilateral trade relations, Moscow and Ankara entered into a phase of redefining their relationship. Aside from the booming energy trade and the increasing trade volume in general, several investments by Turkish construction companies and consumer goods companies like ENKA and Alarko are credited with pulling the two countries towards further cooperation. These advances in trade made it possible for both governments to re-categorize the relationship from a rivalry to a potential partnership in the 2000s. During this new era of cooperation Russia has become one of Turkey's major trading partners and its key energy supplier.

Turkish-Russian relations have been tested seriously since the beginning of the 2000s. The American operation in Iraq in 2003 and the Russian-Georgian War of 2008 each merit special attention.

2.1 Iraq War & 1 March Bill

The events of 9/11 and in the 2003 Iraq War solidified political ties between Russia and Turkey. Just after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, both Ankara and Moscow declared their readiness to fight against international terrorism. Bilateral relations also improved significantly after 1 March 2003, when the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) did not authorize U.S. troops access to Iraq through Turkish territory. This was one of the first major challenges for the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government, which had just come to power after the general election in November 2002.

This critical move by the legislative body, which cast Turkey's image positively in the region as a self-directed country, caused a problematic phase between Ankara and Washington. This was a remarkable moment for Moscow, too, because it showed that Ankara could oppose its greatest NATO ally.⁸

2. 2 Russia-Georgia War

The Russia-Georgia War directly affected the relationship between Russia and Turkey.⁹ When Washington sent warships to the Black Sea to transport humanitarian aid to Georgia, then the Deputy Chief of Russian General Staff immediately invoked the Montreux Convention. According to the Montreux Convention, “vessels of war belonging to non-Black Sea Powers shall not remain in the Black Sea more than twenty-one days, whatever be the object of their presence there”. Ankara had referred to these provisions to prevent the deployment of NATO’s Operation Active Endeavour in the Black Sea. Turkey abided strictly by the terms of Montreux and even reportedly denied access to two large U.S. hospital ships.

Even though the Georgian War had important impacts on the region and on bilateral relations between Moscow and Ankara, Turkey’s stance during the crisis and its decision not to let U.S. ships into the Black Sea clearly demonstrated Turkey’s desire to solve regional problems with regional solutions. Moreover, Turkey has historically resisted renegotiating the status of the Turkish straits which are currently regulated under the Montreux Convention.¹⁰

Looking at the two critical events mentioned above, Turkey’s policy has been to approach regional events delicately and sensitively. Additionally, Turkey offered to establish the Caucasus Stability Pact to solve disputes with the other states of the region. These moves were received positively in Moscow¹¹, which seeks multi-polarity in international relations.

3. Current Dynamics

Apart from the Iraq and Georgia case, the diplomatic traffic between Ankara and Moscow has picked up steam since the beginning of 2000s. High-level meetings and discussions have become routine and formal and informal communication during times of crisis has become a normal practice. Relations started changing in earnest with Russian President Putin’s visit to Ankara in December 2004, which was followed by a reciprocal visit by Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan to Moscow in January 2005. The visit of President Putin was the first time that a Russian head of the state had come to Turkey for an official visit since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These bilateral visits started the high-level traffic and increasing cooperation that has come to define relations in the past decade.

As İlerTuran says, “there are elements of competition as well as cooperation in the Turkish-Russian relationship”.¹² Cooperation stems, most of all, from the recognition that the ideological polarization that characterized the nature of Turkey-Russia relations during the Cold War now belongs to the past. European countries, as well as the EU as a distinct entity, are interested in maintaining peaceful relations with Russia. Equally important are the significant, mutually beneficial opportunities for Turkey and Russia to expand their economic relations. Rapid growth in the volume of economic transactions between the two countries testifies to this potential. Moreover there are many opportunities worth pursuing in security, culture, education, etc. However, competition is an unavoidable fact of the state system.

Table 1. High-Level Official Visits between Turkey and Russia (2000-2012)

	City	Date
Prime Minister Mikhail Khazyanov & Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit	Ankara	October 2000
Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov & President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, PM Bülent Ecevit and Foreign Minister İsmail Cem	Ankara	June 2001
President Vladimir Putin & President Sezer, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	Ankara	December 2004
PM Erdoğan & President Putin	Moscow	January 2005
PM Erdoğan & President Putin	Sochi	July 2005
President Sezer & President Putin	Moscow	June 2006
President Abdullah Gül & President Dmitri Medvedev	Moscow	February 2009
PM Vladimir Putin & PM Erdoğan	Ankara	August 2009
PM Erdoğan & President Medvedev	Moscow	January 2010
President Medvedev & PM Erdoğan	Ankara	May 2010
PM Putin & PM Erdoğan	İstanbul	June 2010
PM Erdoğan & PM Putin	Moscow	March 2011
PM Erdoğan & President Putin	Moscow	July 2012
President Putin & PM Erdoğan	Ankara	December 2012
Source: Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ankara		

The recent Syrian airliner case is one of the most noticeable examples that caused temporary tension between Russia and Turkey. Turkey intercepted and forced a Syrian airliner, flying from Moscow with 35 passengers, including Russian citizens, to land in Ankara in October 2012. Ankara's claim that Russian military equipment was on board was vehemently denied by Moscow that insisted rather that the cargo was just spare parts. Yet, Putin's decision to postpone his next trip to Ankara was quickly linked to this incident, resulting in speculation over freezing bilateral relations.¹³

The High-Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) meeting was scheduled to take place in October. It was postponed due to Russian President Putin's health. Although this delay is commonly associated with the "Airplane Crisis", a few days after the crisis it was announced that Putin's visit would take place on 3 December 2012. Therefore a firm message was conveyed that there had been no rupture in bilateral relations. Moreover, even though the media discussed the "Airplane Crisis", leaders chose not to emphasize it. In fact, before Putin's visit Russian Ambassador to Ankara Vladimir Ivanovski declared that the intercepted Syrian plane would not be on the agenda.¹⁴

Turkey and Russia appear to have put aside their differences on Syria and prioritized intensifying economic and other relations. That is not to say that the "Airplane Crisis", the Patriot missile systems along the border between Turkey and Syria, or the NATO radar base in Kürecik are not irritants in bilateral relations between Ankara and Moscow. But the fact remains that Turkey and Russia are still upgrading political cooperation by signing more agreements on economic, cultural, and security subjects. The tensions brought on by the Syria conflict are still dwarfed by the burgeoning areas of bilateral cooperation.

4. Opportunities and Challenges to be Addressed

Turkey and Russia are located in a geography connected to conflicts in the Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Middle East. The outstanding dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and the dispute between Georgia and Abkhazia still have the potential to upset Turkey–Russia relations, as Turkey and Russia are on different sides in both these conflicts. However, current political relations between Turkey and Russia, in contrast to the early 1990s, are sturdy enough to withstand these divergences. Even though Eurasia and the Middle East have sensitive areas for Ankara and Moscow, regional crises occupying the agendas of Russia and Turkey are not a product of bilateral relations themselves. Therefore Russian-Turkish cooperation cannot directly solve all these problems. As Fyodor Lukyanov suggests Ankara and Moscow can create a group like the Aspen Strategic Group with private capacities from both sides.¹⁵ There is also a need for a permanent forum for a continuous exchange of ideas so that the parties may explore and pursue common strategies on problematic areas. In the following section some such issues will be illustrated within the context of their regional dynamics.

4.1 The Caucasus and Central Asia

The South Caucasus region has been and will continue to be the main testing ground for Russia and Turkey to establish a secure and stable environment. This has already been partially achieved. One of these instances was Russian support for Turkey's Caucasus Platform after the Russian-Georgian War in August 2008. Second, Russia has spent considerable effort in bringing together the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides for a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Third, Russia's support for the protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia was another strong indicator of good will on the part of Moscow, demonstrating that Russia and Turkey share the same vision of peace and security in the South Caucasus. Oktay Firat Tanrıseven argues that Russia and Turkey should be more oriented toward encouraging Azerbaijan and Armenia to sign a peace deal. This would make finding a solution for the dispute between Turkey and Armenia easier as well. If a war breaks out over the Karabakh issue it will definitely destabilize the whole region.¹⁶ Yet, Turkey and Russia have the resources to prevent such a scenario. As the potential for conflict is high, Turkey and Russia should not limit their mission to de-escalation, but should take it upon themselves to help reconcile the conflict. Nagorno-Karabakh is a place where Russia has deep and sincere interests in peace. Russia is well aware of the dangers of a war there, as it will lead to a very difficult situation for Russia and Turkey.

Indeed, solutions to the conflicts in the Caucasus would be of great value to both countries because the longer the disputes remain unresolved, the longer the states in the region will choose to arm themselves and draw in extra-regional allies, complicating an already fragile balance of power.

Central Asia and the Caspian region are important geographies for Russia and Turkey. Moreover Central Asia is a region where Moscow and Ankara appear to be competitors. The region has been seen as Russia's backyard, but after the dissolution of the USSR

Turkey's influence has been gradually increasing. However, if Russia and Turkey collaborated in the region it would contribute to stability. In this regard, Shlykov argues that "Turkey's efforts of training the military and security personnel of these countries might serve this aim".¹⁷ In fact, capacity building through consolidating institutions will be an important bulwark against chaos during a financial or political crisis. Instead of pursuing these projects unilaterally, they should be systematized between Turkey, Russia, and regional countries.

4. 2 The Black Sea Region as an Area of Cooperation

The BSEC is just one example of how Turkey and Russia can marshal their goodwill to work together responsibly and efficiently. In 1992, right after the end of the Cold War, the two countries initiated the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). As the organization includes diverse countries with diverse ambitions, the whole concept of the BSEC would not have been possible without very close cooperation between Moscow and Ankara. This institution has been active for the last 20 years and has been able to find common ground for many serious problems. On the other hand, as all other member states, with the exception of Turkey, had a background of planned economy, and still experience of economic transformation, the efficiency and institutional development of the organization has remained limited.¹⁸

The BSEC can be transformed into a more active organization covering a wider array of issues more efficiently, especially in the field of regional political and economic integration which has so far remained underdeveloped. With this aim in mind, the BSEC is capable of providing a consultation mechanism for member countries to address a range of issues. Another possibility is a BSEC peacekeeping force that can be deployed in certain areas.

Frozen conflicts in Southern Caucasus and the Balkans are impeding the advancement of regional cooperation as well as the deepening of Turkish-Russian relations. Therefore the establishment of a security-building mechanism, either bilaterally or pioneered by Ankara and Moscow under the auspices of the BSEC, is something to be considered.

Possible regional security mechanism schemes:

- *South Caucasus Security Mechanism: Turkey, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia*
- *Black Sea Security Mechanism: Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria*
- *Balkans Security Mechanism: Turkey, Russia, Greece, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Croatia*

Developing common initiatives and multi-dimensional cooperation in all three sub-regions will benefit both countries as well as their partners. By means of these security mechanisms, Ankara and Moscow can completely abandon traditional balancing policies against each other.

NATO is shifting its strategy from expanding its European boundaries to creating a more flexible security alliance, and the U.S. is shifting its focus to the Pacific as an act of “rebalancing” China based on its new security doctrine.¹⁹ This will eventually reduce tensions between NATO and Russia in the Black Sea basin. Consequently, NATO will become more eager to cooperate with Russia in combating illicit networks and terrorist organizations, and in dealing with potential humanitarian crises across the region. At this juncture, Turkey and Russia can give shape to the initiatives concerning the wider Black Sea area by collaborating with international organizations such as the UN, NATO, and the EU.

However, Russia has still doubts about NATO’s role in the Black Sea basin. According to the Foreign Minister of Russia Sergei Lavrov, “the Russian military doctrine says that Russia sees a danger not in NATO as such, but in NATO trying to play a global role with global military reach, NATO making its military posture universal...not NATO as such, but this intention to grab everything...and danger in NATO expansion accompanied by moving military infrastructure closer to the borders Russia”. Sergei Lavrov states that “NATO is becoming more and more ideological and its expansion is absolutely artificially promoted, creating unnecessary dividing lines”.²⁰

4. 3 Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the potential areas of cooperation for Turkey and Russia. NATO has declared that it will pull its forces out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014. It is foreshadowed that post-NATO, Afghanistan will become vulnerable to the emergence of various regional security risks.²¹ The U.S. and Iran have already initiated direct talks on Afghanistan in 2012 through an Indian initiative. The U.S. approaches the talk with the aims of weakening the Taliban and maintaining the rule of the current Afghani government. As for India, it aims to reduce Afghanistan’s dependence on Pakistan by offering Iran as an alternative. Under these circumstances there is a risk that Pakistan, in response, supports the Taliban more and leans toward a closer strategic partnership with China. An intense rivalry between Pakistan-China and India-Iran could rapidly lead Afghanistan down the road toward deeper chaos.

An unstable Afghanistan would threaten the stability of the whole Central Asian neighborhood. Ankara and Moscow can cooperate in keeping all relevant parties involved and coherent in the process with the help of their close ties with the countries neighboring Afghanistan. Therefore a Turkish-Russian joint initiative is urgently required in order to discuss post-2014 scenarios and cooperation schemes in Afghanistan.

4. 4 Syria: Both Challenge and Opportunity

The crisis in Syria is one of the greatest current challenges to the regional and global world order. Following the Arab popular movements in the Middle East, the political unrest in the country has turned into a civil war over the last two years. According to the UN, more than 93.000 people have lost their lives and another one million people have taken refuge in neighboring countries. The number of internally displaced people is estimated to be around five million.²² The international community seems to be unable to quell the deepening violence that erodes the Syrian state itself.

From the day the uprisings began in Syria, it was known that Ankara and Moscow's fundamental interests diverged on certain things. Their main aims, however, converge on the necessity to preserve Syria's territorial integrity and reestablish the state's authority. In fact, the leaders of the two countries have publicly expressed that their goals about the stability and territorial integrity of the country are the same, and that the foreign ministries should establish intensive dialogue mechanisms for a real solution. Russia wants to solve the conflict through diplomatic rather than military means. This is one of Turkey's main goals, too. Both sides supported the roadmap to establish an interim government at the Geneva Conference. Such a suggestion at least gives hope about the possibility of working in concert. One of the main problems is the structure of the government to be established. Bashar al-Assad himself has perhaps too much baggage to be a part of any possible government. On the other hand, for some Russian circles Assad is still the strongest leader in the country.²³ The problem is the civil war has been steadily eroding the power of state institutions. We are fast approaching a crisis where the state collapses entirely, rendering the country ungovernable.

The Russian and Turkish Heads of State have met several times since the Syrian uprising started. Priorities and policy proposals have differed when it comes to Syria. While PM Erdoğan emphasizes the increasing number of civilian casualties in Syria, President Putin is very much concerned about preventing any military intervention led by the West. Nevertheless, the Syria crisis is an example of how Ankara and Moscow are willing to accept problems "as they are", and separate them from the exciting potential in bilateral economic relations. Putin and Erdoğan stated that "we share the same goal, but differ on how to get there", which indicates that Moscow and Ankara have agreed to disagree about Syria for now.²⁴

The 2012 talks in Geneva came up with the decision that there is a need for an interim government to be formed by representatives both from the Syrian opposition and the Assad regime. Ankara and Moscow were part of this consensus. Now, the second Geneva meeting is on the agenda. Even if this initiative fails, which seems unlikely to succeed, one thing is clear that there will be a time for reconstruction of Syria and rebuilding of the state authority in Syria. In this sense, Alexey Malashenko argues that Russia and Turkey should also focus on the roadmap to be followed "the day after" (post-conflict period). The real challenge lies ahead in the post-conflict period, in managing the infrastructural and humanitarian crisis in the country.²⁵

4. 4. 1 Syria as Imagined by Russia and Turkey

The question of “How long will Russia support Assad?” is a common one, especially as civilian casualties mount with no sign of abating. Currently there is a deadlock in the United Nations Security Council as Moscow and Beijing represent the block defending the Assad regime from external interventions. Moscow’s support for the Assad regime can be explained by Russia’s worldview.

First of all, Russia perceives uprisings in the Middle East as matters of internal politics. Russia supports the Syrian government from the perspective that the state is the sole legitimate authority with the right to intervene in civil insurgencies. In this sense, Russia prioritizes the international principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Outside interventions, NATO’s Libya campaign for example, disturbed Moscow. Moscow was caught off guard when the UN resolution that it chose not to veto ended up leading to Gaddafi’s ouster. As for Syria, Russia is firmly against any international action that might precipitate the fall of the Assad regime.

Secondly, Russia has retained close ties with Syria since the Soviet era, and Syria is the last country in the Middle East with which Russia has institutional relations dating back to the 1970s. Moreover, Russia is currently contracted to supply Syria with advanced military equipment and weapons. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev paid an official visit to Damascus in 2010 to strengthen trade ties between the two countries and to promote Russia’s waning presence on the Middle Eastern stage. Moreover, Syria was one of the few countries to support Russia in its war with Georgia.²⁶

Possible regime change in Syria may also mean an end to one of Russia’s most important ally in the region. Considering the regional transformations in the aftermath of the Cold War, Moscow perceives the Syrian regime as its only remaining reliable partner in the Middle East. Thus, Russia’s support to the Assad government is a matter of pure geopolitical interest. For a long time the absence of a reliable political actor as an alternative to the Assad government has prevented Moscow from reversing course. However, the opposition has taken a certain path and gained a crystallized character as a political actor. Thus, the delicate point in Syria is not about political alternatives or actors rather it is about preventing a failed state in Syria from feeding instability in a wider geography that would affect Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Turkey, and could also feed extremism that would cause some problems in global scale.

Since the Assad regime is both a source of economic benefit and a political trump card, a regime change in Syria has the potential to diminish Russian regional influence below that of any other major player.

Thirdly, the Syrian crisis is a game changer. It has become a matter of challenging the structural basis of the international system as a whole. For Russia the cost of possible regime change in Syria will be more than the loss of some arms trade agreements. It appears now that the Moscow administration, perceiving color revolutions and unilateral interventions by the Western countries as contrary to its interests, aims to protect not Assad himself but Russia’s elbow room in Syria and state sovereignty.

Lastly, the Tartus base -the only Russian naval base in the Middle East- is another factor that makes Syria an important partner for Moscow. Russian Naval Forces have been using Tartus as a naval base according to an agreement that was signed in 1971. Moscow started to restore the base in 2008. The recent, destabilizing uprisings in the Middle East have proven that the Tartus base has lost none of its strategic value.

In conclusion, any effort to convince Russia to change its tack should realize that Russia is not so much wedded to the Assad regime as it is keen on preserving its interests and preventing dangerous precedents from being set.

As for Turkey, not interfering in Syria is not a prudent choice within the scope of *realpolitik*. Syria outranks all other Arab countries when it comes to its significance to Turkey. How Syria's future takes shape as well as its inter-ethnic, inter-religious dynamics are beyond mere Syrian internal matters: they carry regional implications. The border separating Syria and Turkey is not contiguous with economic and cultural zones; rather, they bisect historically united regions. Syria is a natural extension of the Anatolian human terrain. The cross-border affinities have tremendous political import in how the countries behave toward one another. Therefore, Turkey choosing to watch events in Syria from the sidelines may be tantamount to allowing the instability to spill over into its own house.

Currently, when one observes the extent to which the civil war in Syria has already impacted Turkey, it becomes easier to discern exactly why Syria is so important for Turkey. As of now, a total of around 400,000 Syrians, registered or otherwise, reside in Turkey.²⁷ Building camps and providing humanitarian aid to the refugees living in them have cost nearly \$600 million so far.²⁸ Above economic costs, falling bombshells, a shot-down fighter plane, and bombings in Cilvegözü, Gaziantep, Reyhanlı, and Kayseri have taken dozens of lives, caused hundreds of injuries, and led to tremendous political tension in Turkey. A further, oft-ignored cost is the psychological strain these events have created in Turkey's border cities.

Moreover, Turkey takes issue with the state-sanctioned human rights violations in Syria along with the threat against the territorial integrity of the country. The prolonged conflict will 'Afghanistanize' the country, leaving it in under the control of warlords, terrorists, and other non-state actors. This might trigger the expansion of extremism and instability in the region. Chaos in Syria has undeniable and dire implications for Turkey's domestic and regional stability. In this sense, there is a common understanding between Turkey and Russia when it comes to Syria's future.

5. Future Perspectives: Opportunities and Challenges

The best way to thicken mutually-beneficial Turkish-Russian relations is to bolster regional cooperation. One of the main challenges seems to be finding room to work together on the Syrian crisis. Cooperation on the Syrian crisis, however, can be a precursor to cooperation in other parts of the world too. Shlykov argues that as Ankara and Moscow cooperate they learn how to depoliticize problems and convert arenas of competition into areas for cooperation. This can be especially useful in dealing with their common challenges that require a holistic approach, e.g. the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Balkans, the Middle East, global governance, development, and counter-terrorism.²⁹ Yet, Syria has a potential of deepening Turkey and Russia's shared challenges and that causes it to dominate the political agenda one way or another.

5.1 Syria

Russian and Turkish intellectuals agree that Ankara and Moscow can jointly initiate a reconciliation process to end the civil war in Syria. It is a humanitarian responsibility incumbent on the entire international community to do all they can to contribute to a peace process in Syria. Turkish and Russian policymakers are well aware of how valuable their joint projects have been in the last decade. The Syrian crisis has the potential to transform into another such project, despite the fact that it still poses a serious danger to Turkey-Russia relations.

According to Hüseyin Bağcı, "Syria is Russia's last castle. Russia wants to keep the secular Nusayri regime intact to some extent, as they believe this policy will a lid on its own restive Muslim minorities".³⁰ The regime's character is crucial when one considers the regional balances, but concerns are currently more security-oriented than ideological. The issue is not whether the regime will be more Islamic-leaning or not. The question is, what will the character of the Islamism be, radical or cooperative? Taking the Afghanistan under the Taliban as a reference, the challenge in Syria is to prevent the country from turning into a safe haven for terrorist groups with the potential to threaten regional and global stability. The groups fighting for power in Syria are working with anybody who offers help. Whoever provides assistance to these groups, therefore, has power to shape their worldview toward moderation or radicalization.

Staying out of the process and failing to reach a long lasting solution in Syria, however, increases the possibility that the conflict becomes more internationalized, in turn pushing the state and opposition groups toward radicalization. The primary issue is mainly finding a way to decrease the level of tension, but later rebuilding the state authority in the country, which requires the support of international actors when the time comes. In this sense, Russia and Turkey's efforts to keep dialogue channels open between foreign ministries and working on certain roadmap that will be applied in a systematic manner have utmost importance. The HLCC Joint Strategic Planning Group will be necessary in the creation of an effective dialogue mechanism for regional multidimensional cooperation. But Russia and Turkey could also create different working groups on

regional security issues to give such a dialogue mechanism the required depth and breadth. Independent advisory bodies composed of the two countries' leading experts, businessmen, academics, and policymakers could further assist these working groups.

5. 2 NATO

NATO is less challenging to Russia now than it was during the Cold War era. NATO is after all a legacy of the Cold War, but NATO is transforming.³¹ Lukyanov argues that NATO is transforming from a purely defensive alliance into one that actively intervenes beyond its member-states' territories. In this sense, the 'New NATO' is something completely novel in its essence and practices.³²

These kinds of interpretations of NATO among the Russian intelligentsia have been mainly shaped by the Libya operation and the NATO missile shield project. Turkey supports these policies as a NATO member and uses NATO's support to strengthen its defense capabilities against a possible threat coming from Syria. There is a certain consistency in Turkish-Russian dialogue in that the parties have been able to successfully compartmentalize their relations in a way that these issues are part of the discussion but don't undermine the cooperation. Russia prefers to address NATO about these issues, rather than directly engaging with Turkey. In this sense, this is a healthy stance that helps to preserve the positive atmosphere developed over the past decade. However, this does not necessarily mean that the dialogue between NATO and Russia is unproductive. Rather with the support of Turkey, NATO and Russia dialogue can be developed further through the existing NATO-Russia Council mechanism. NATO perceives no major threat against its members emanating from Russia. The main concerns of NATO are asymmetric threats like terrorism, radical movements, illicit trafficking, fanatic religious movements, and the diffusion of weapons of mass destruction -problems that the Russian Federation must also address. Furthermore, both Russia and Turkey are frontline states dealing with the brunt of these threats. Turkish-Russian cooperation in confronting these security concerns would not only be welcomed by NATO but might elicit NATO support or the support of its individual member states.

Both Russia and Turkey have a stake in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The diffusion of nuclear weapons increases insecurity primarily for those who do not have them, enticing them to entertain notions of producing or acquiring their own. Turkey is insulated from this need by its NATO membership, but a multiplicity of actors -some experiencing political turmoil and questionable security mechanisms- with nuclear weapons presents common security concerns to Turkey and Russia. Russia's recognition that Turkey has legitimate security concerns that are met through its NATO alliance would facilitate military cooperation. An example is the deployment of Patriot Missiles on the Turkish side of the border with Syria. Their deployment is clearly for defensive purposes and should cause no discomfort for Russia. Similarly, the placement of Anti-Ballistic Missile radar on Turkish territory is not intended against Russia. This is a system mainly deployed to counter any threats coming to NATO member states from third parties. Russia has repeatedly shared its well-founded concerns about missiles piling up in the region with NATO and Turkey. In response, NATO should emphasize the defensive nature of the system and both sides should strengthen NATO-Russia confidence-building measures in the European region.

5. 3 Extremism

The new dynamics brought on by globalization have brought new opportunities in the international system, but they've also brought new security challenges. Extremism is not only one such new threat, but also a new area of potential security cooperation. Russian-Turkish cooperation against such extremism is a necessity, since geographically these two countries are open to radical movements emanating from the Middle East and Eurasia. Linking radicalism with any religion or ethnic group can be misleading in many ways. The massacre of Anders Breivik in Norway is a crucial case to show that the connection that has been made between Islam and extremism is inappropriate, as extremism has no particular religion or ethnicity but is a matter and concern for modern world and whole civilization. It is a destructive mentality that has no respect or tolerance for everyone's right to live and be different. In other words, radicalism, extremism, and xenophobia are important threats for individual freedom and state sovereignty in the 21st century. It is true that extremists might exploit certain ideologies in an instrumental way. This does not mean extremist movements represent these ideologies just because they have an instrumental interest in them.

In this sense, cooperation of Turkey and Russia in this area will be productive as both countries have certain level of accumulated experience and prone to this threat due to their geopolitical locations. This dialogue may also contribute to the debate going on in the global scale. For such cooperation, primarily, a common discourse needs to be developed. Thus, there is a need to redefine and reevaluate these concepts that have become popular after the 9/11 events. Asymmetric threats and non-state actors are phenomena of the new international system and their destructive capability is alarming. The asymmetric threats emanating from radical groups had local characteristics before. But due to new developments in communication technologies and intensified global mobility the threat gained a global character in parallel are new global challenges. Yet, there is risk to perceive regional dynamics from the lens of extremism. In this regard, it is important to differentiate recent Arab popular movements in the Middle East from political Islam and extremism.

New challenges and new threats need to be countered with new approaches and new solutions because traditional understandings that evolved under old dynamics are necessarily obsolete. Even though Turkey and Russia have recently shown the tendency to develop new instruments and approaches to combat asymmetric challenges, still, remnants of the Cold War mentality can be observed in bilateral considerations. Counter balancing efforts only using instruments of security approach can slow down the threat temporarily. In other words policies, preventing or oppressing certain activities may end up with causing further problems in the long run. Thus, there is a need to develop new policies to eliminate the core reasons that produce this sort of twisted thought patterns like cooperative approaches supported by security instruments when necessary.

Kortunov says "the Islamic awakening in Russia is also an important development. After the 70-year length of Soviet rule the state dominance on the religious sphere changed characteristic opening more space for individuals. However, it is a challenge for Russia in certain respects and the Kremlin still does not know what shape this evolving Islam might

take in such a complex international environment. The ‘Turkish option’ is a preferred alternative for Russia, but still each country and society has its own dynamics.”³³ So instead of taking systems as models, dialogue between Turkey and Russia will help to elucidate how to tackle rising challenges in this area. Thus, there is a need to discuss the Russian and Turkish perceptions of Islam, as well as Turkey’s understanding of Islam and democracy.

To conclude, the last decade of Turkish-Russian cooperation is a radical break from the previous 500 years of arch-rivalry.³⁴ The long history of bilateral relations has reached the level and complexity we witness today through a challenging path. The steady and multi-faceted expansion of our cooperation in the last two decades has dramatically transformed the nature of our bilateral relations, moving Turkey and Russia ever closer together.

Despite the dialogue brought about chiefly due to burgeoning economic relations, relations still have a limited capacity to resolve regional and global issues that have historical depth. Even though the Turkish media presents Russia as a “strategic partner”, both countries have somewhat different foreign policy preferences regarding particular problems. Therefore, even though dialogue channels are open and are being used effectively during crisis times, the relationship still lacks a problem-solving dimension. Yet, the different positions in different crisis do not undermine the cooperation in bilateral level as we observe in the recent case of Syria. This also shows that compartmentalization in Turkish-Russian relations has been successful, and has made bilateral relations more predictable.

While Turkey and Russia may not be the best of allies, shared pragmatism will keep the relationship strong, with each seeing the other as a valuable asset in its quest for structuring an autonomous foreign policy.³⁵

2 ECONOMY

Russia and Turkey, with their respective GDPs of \$1.858 trillion and \$775 billion, are both G20 members. Both are upper middle-income class countries according to the World Bank.

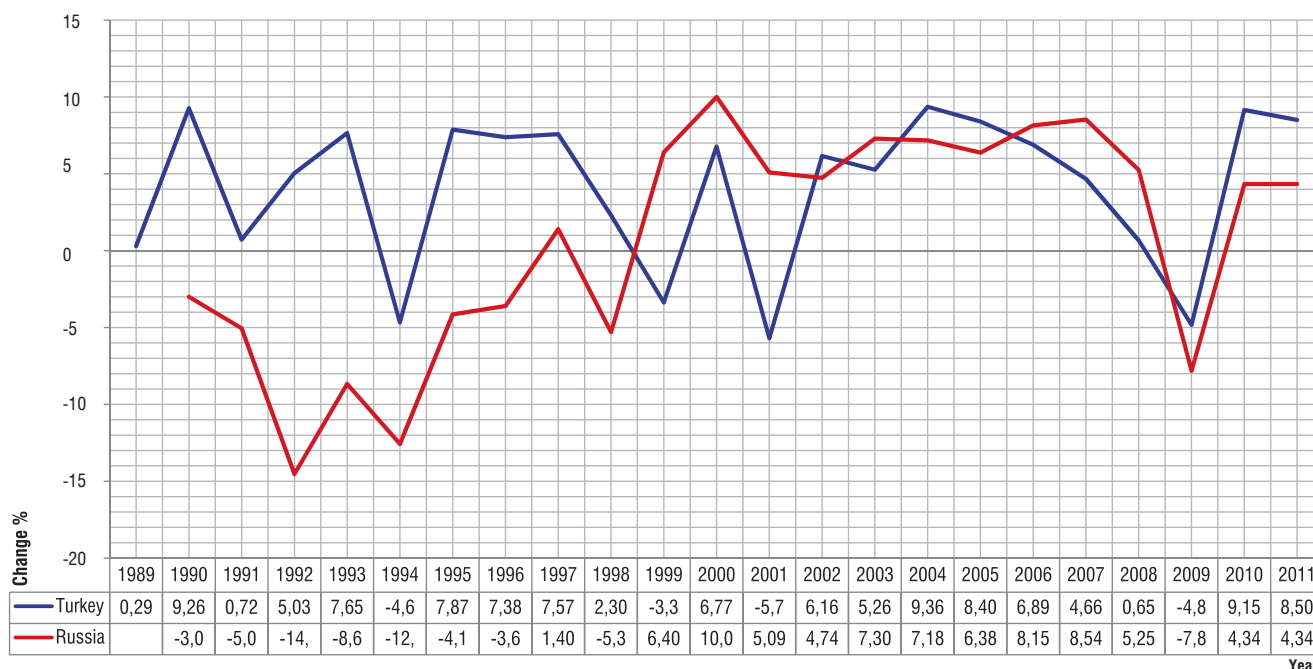
Both are connected to the world economy through their World Trade Organization membership, and they are both mainly foreign-trade oriented economies. These characteristics are what make Russia and Turkey prominent economic actors in Eurasia.

In this part of the report the dynamics that define the economic relations between Russia and Turkey will be scrutinized. First the profile of economic relations will be analyzed. Second, institutional structures like the Joint Economic Commission and the High Level Cooperation Council will be examined. Last, there will be a section specifically about cooperation in the energy sphere.

1. Bilateral Trade

In the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s both Russia and Turkey experienced grave economic crises that created an unfavorable political and economic environment. Yet, the dynamics behind this turbulence varied. First, the transformation of the economic system from a state-controlled economy to a market economy after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the introduction of shock-therapy reforms and low oil prices during 1990s are among the structural reasons why the Russian economy was so fragile. There were even two consecutive years during the 1990s when the Russian economy did not grow. Second, Russian economy experienced an external aftershock from the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The resulting contraction shrunk the economy by 5% in 1998. The Turkish economy on the other hand suffered from unstable coalition governments. The lack of long-overdue reforms pushed it into three economic crises in 1994, 1999, and 2001.

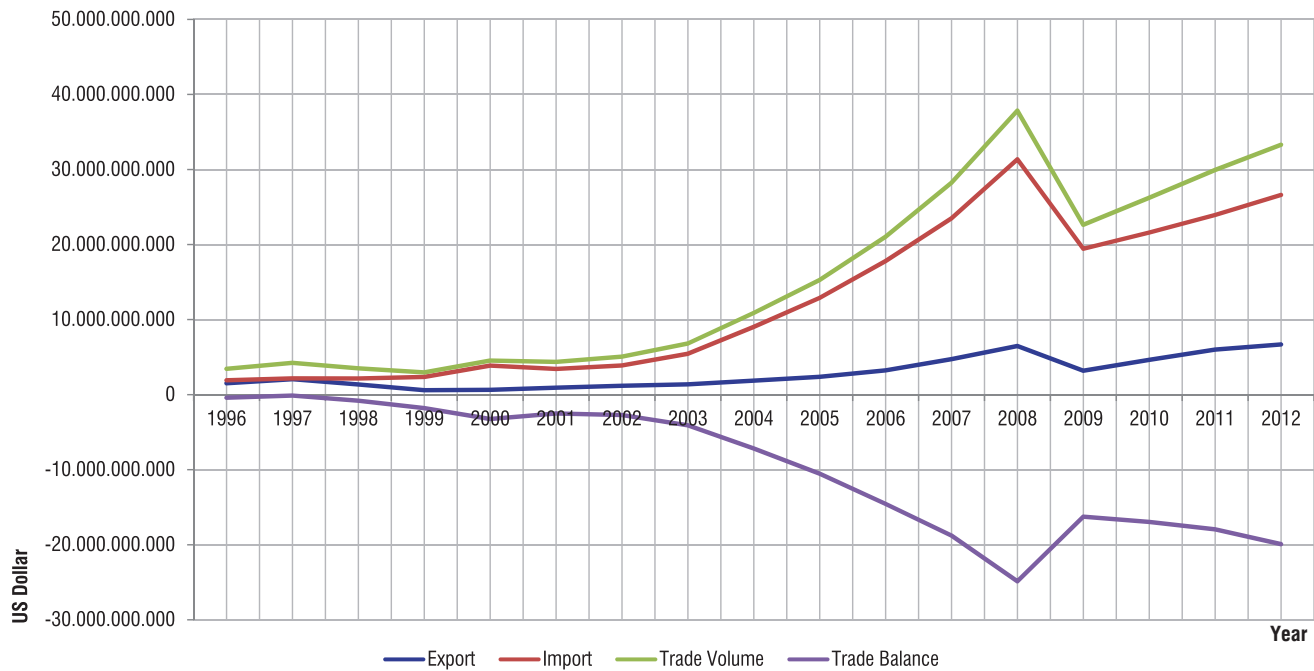
Graph 1. GDP Growth of Turkey and the Russian Federation (1989-2011)



Source: The World Bank

Instability from cyclical crises had negative repercussions on both countries' bilateral trade. The trade volume between Russia and Turkey hardly increased from \$3.4 billion to \$4.5 billion between 1996 and 2000. Yet, starting from 2001 there was a steady increase in bilateral trade from \$4.3 billion to \$38 billion in 2008. Unfortunately, the 2008 financial crisis negatively impacted bilateral trade as the trade volume fell back to \$22.6 billion in 2009. Recently, bilateral trade has gained some positive momentum and started to converge with pre-crisis levels once again.

Graph 2. Turkey-Russia Trade Volume (1996-2012)



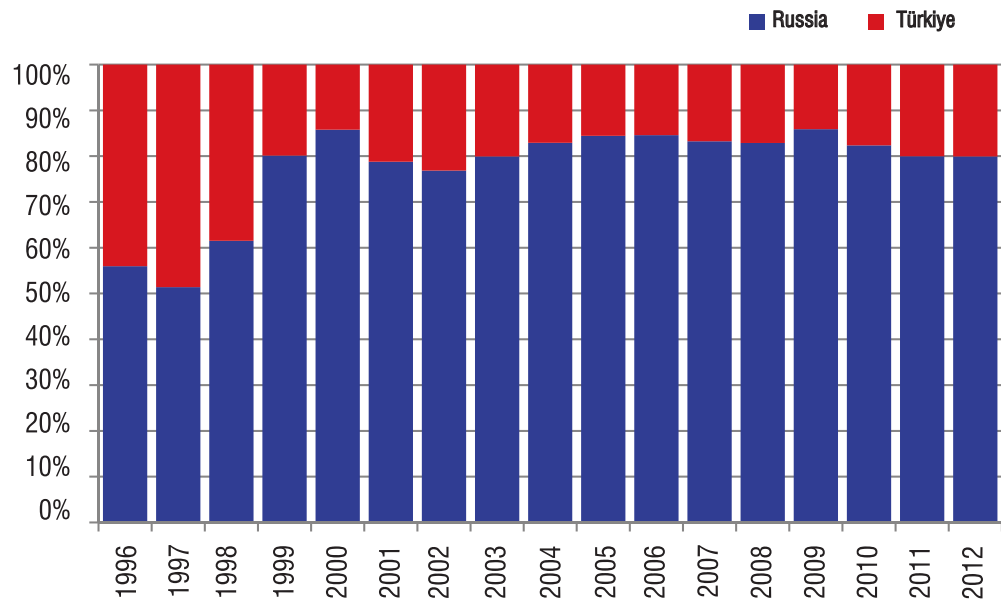
Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

Even though the trade volume expanded quickly in the last decade, one of the main concerns of the Turkish experts and politicians is the growing trade deficit in favor of the Russian Federation. In fact, there was nearly balanced picture in the 1990s, but Turkey's share in Russia's foreign trade fell to 14% in 2009. There are several reasons of the change in the trade balance.

- 1) The Blue Stream agreement signed in 1998 became active in 2005 and the volume of gas imported from Russia increased.
- 2) Oil and natural gas prices rose after 2002.
- 3) The Russian market has grown more competitive after years of economic turbulence.

The difference of share in foreign trade slightly closed in the post 2008 period. As Turkey's share in foreign trade slightly increased to 20% incrementally, the trade volume has also converged with 2008 values. But still there is a long way to go to reach the target of a \$100 billion trade volume in five years announced during President Abdullah Gül's visit to Moscow in February 2009.³⁶ During the period of 2010-2012 bilateral trade recovered, but volume is still below the peak point of 2008.

Graph 3. Share in Trade Volume between Russia and Turkey (1996-2012)



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

The difference in share in bilateral trade continues to increase in favor of Russia in nominal terms, but at a slowing rate. Turkey's trade deficit was \$19 billion in 2012 -almost \$5 billion below 2008's \$24.9 billion. This is mainly related to the aftereffects of the 2008 crisis. Both Turkey's and Russia's trade decreased tremendously as each economy shrunk in 2009.

Table 2. Structure of Turkey's Foreign Trade with Russia (million \$)

2012	Export	Share (%)	Import	Share (%)
Capital Goods	627	9.4	30	0.1
Intermediate Goods	3.418	51.1	25.841	97.1
Consumption Goods	2.628	39.3	748	2.8
Other	10	0.1	1	0.0
Total	6.683	100.0	26.620	100.0

Source: Foreign Trade Relations Board (DEİK) - Turkey-Russia Business Council Bilateral Relations Report

Table 3. Main Product Groups in Turkey's Export to Russia (million \$)

Product	2010	2011	Change (%)
Textile, fiber products	900.947.631	1.090.934.180	21,09
Vegetables, fruits and products	897.883.133	942.227.071	4,94
Land transportation vehicles	587.989.276	831.731.902	41,45
Internal combustion engine automobiles, electric motor vehicles, etc.	348.607.405	461.990.117	32,52
Other knitted fabrics	313.686.068	414.742.236	32,22
Apparel and accessories	311.669.460	350.667.936	12,51
Electrical machinery and apparatus	199.568.504	341.464.804	71,10
Machinery and equipment used in different sectors	146.952.514	284.002.585	93,26
Fresh tomatoes - chilled	247.699.287	258.563.756	4,39
Orange, mandarin	161.515.984	205.442.152	27,20
Miscellaneous manufactured goods	123.818.534	201.828.053	63,00
Metals final Products	152.245.604	171.410.502	12,59
Fabrics of synthetic filament yarn	126.483.927	148.896.139	17,72
Motor vehicles for the transport of goods	74.579.654	134.815.264	80,77
Goods with silver, silver-plated precious metals, pearls	67.265.273	128.053.927	90,37
Insulated wire, cable, electric Conductors, fiber optic cables	40.574.841	94.001.664	131,67
Air conditioners	17.770.100	88.322.477	397,03
Fur, fake fur clothing, accessories	75.319.208	81.472.426	8,17
Electric circuit kit	45.902.300	63.339.220	37,99
Ordinary metal door locks, deadbolt, hardware, assembly, safety deposit box, security drawers	49.423.307	54.031.184	9,32
Leather and leather wearing apparel	29.018.831	35.560.990	22,54
Showcase, counter and so on. Type cooler and freezers, accessories and their parts	20.476.275	31.935.069	55,96
Plastic box, crate furniture enclosure	15.097.124	19.974.766	32,31

Source: Ministry of Economy of Turkey

Moreover, the demand for oil and gas in the Western market fell, which negatively affected the price of these commodities. This has also slowed the growing energy bill that Turkey pays to Russia. Nevertheless the trade deficit between Russia and Turkey seems to be unfair and needs to be balanced in a way that eliminates barriers to Turkey's exporting to the Russian Federation- thus making economic relations sustainable. One of the main barriers is the long-waits at Russian customs due to tight controls for export products or complex bureaucratic mechanisms in the local level. Considering the \$100 billion target, the parties should find ways to remove these sort of barriers so that entrepreneurs have better access to domestic markets.

Table 4. Main Product Groups in Turkey's Import to Russia (million \$)

Product	2010	2011	Change (%)
Coal gas, water gas, poor gas, Petroleum gas	6.645.193.052	10.892.050.736	63,91
Natural gas	6.204.009.577	10.295.440.860	65,95
Coal tar and crude oil products	7.888.180.238	4.468.072.487	-43,36
Liquid fuel	6.014.466.084	2.768.989.359	-53,96
Iron and steel	1.592.724.538	2.050.010.973	28,71
Crude oil	1.873.295.620	1.698.990.387	-9,30
Non-ferrous metals and their products	1.574.873.886	1.593.844.658	1,20
Coal and lignite, coke and crude oil produced from coal and lignite	1.419.400.907	1.469.828.473	3,55
Anthracite	1.391.617.356	1.375.679.114	-1,15
Unprocessed aluminum	861.140.336	1.136.086.880	31,93
Metal ore crumbs, spills, scraps	651.302.584	1.110.110.922	70,44
Iron and steel waste and scrap	577.206.574	1.047.658.135	81,50
Iron, steel flat-rolled products	789.577.279	912.776.446	15,60
Liquefied other hydrocarbon gases	427.064.135	555.982.047	30,19
Cereals and its products	387.745.896	550.244.065	41,91
Other types of wheat	321.675.376	498.639.577	55,01
Fertilizers	218.082.186	350.328.931	60,64
Iron, semi-finished alloy steel products - carbon by weight < % 0,25	284.366.422	311.593.234	9,57
Treated copper wires	83.336.482	211.561.735	153,86
Nitrogenous minerals and chemical Fertilizers	175.530.334	206.220.013	17,48
Two or three mineral constituting Chemical, fertilizers preparation	42.344.979	127.546.349	201,21
Coke and semi-coke products	9.576.900	68.894.845	619,39%
Iron ores and iron ore concentrates	73.342.022	51.975.951	-29,13%
Husks of rice in glume (paddy)	47.169.902	34.942.123	-25,92%
Source: Ministry of Economy of Turkey			

One of the main areas that parties can improve is to find some alternatives to stimulate the mobility between the countries. For instance, Turkish trucks faced difficulties at custom gates when entering Russia in the second half of the 2000s. The problem was one of the main topics in the IX. Joint Economic Commission during Putin's visit to Turkey. One solution developed was bilateral implementation of "Simplified Customs Line" (SCL) in the last quarter of 2009. SCL is an electronic system that helps boost bilateral trade by expediting customs transactions that regularly take 2-3 months.³⁷ Additionally, SCL also aims to roll back the shadow economy in foreign trade. It is estimated that within a couple of years the system will boost Turkish exports from \$6-7 billion to \$15-\$20 billion as more shuttle trade is done through SCL.³⁸ Efforts like SCL to standardize and streamline procedures are crucial to increasing the mobility of goods between Russia and Turkey.

Comparing Turkey's 2010 export performance with that of 2011 shows that areas of growth are mainly in industrial goods rather than raw materials or agriculture products. On the other side, the same period shows strong gains in Russian energy and raw material exports. In this sense, the two economies are compatible. However, looking at the table above, Russia exports mainly raw materials. Considering the low-value added advantage of this sort of commodities it may not be in the advantage of the Russian side in the long run as the price of raw materials draw a cyclical trend in the global markets. Thus, there is also need to diversify trade sectors before bilateral trade can be considered healthy. In this regard, business circles should organize bilateral visits to sites and sectors desired for diversification.

Russia imports the most from China and Germany. These are among the leading countries in terms of low-tech and high-tech products, respectively. Considering these countries' trade performance with Russia the target of \$100 billion is not impossible, especially as Turkey and Russia are geographically close. In fact, low transportations costs along with the potential of increased mobility give Turkey-Russian trade an advantage. But there is a need for new strategies to increase Turkey and Russia's competitive advantages in each other's markets. In this way both sides may achieve sectorial-diverse bilateral trade. Moreover, while competing with these countries, Russia and Turkey may preserve their market share as well as expand the volume of bilateral trade. In this sense, Russian membership to the WTO represents both a chance and challenge as the barriers have been eased and certain standards introduced: Turkish entrepreneurs will be facing a more competitive market in Russia, but this market will be more open to foreign trade.

2. Economic Cooperation and Investment

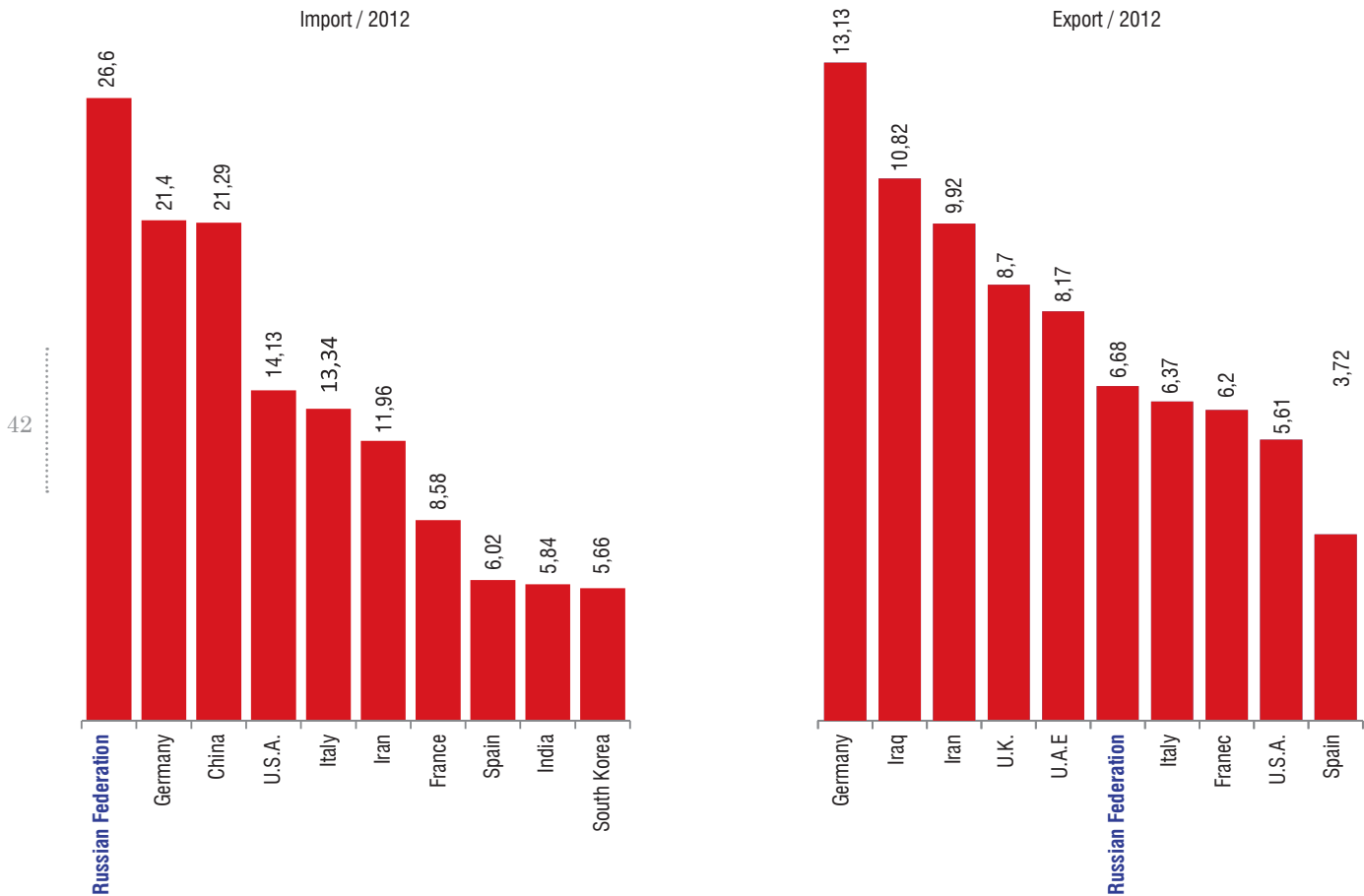
There are a number of areas in economic relations that experts should comprehensively analyze. Shuttle trade (*bavul ticareti*) and tourism should not be ignored. Particularly shuttle trade was of vital significance in economic relations during the 1990s. The volume of the shuttle trade reached a high point of 8.8 billion dollars in 1996, even though it gradually decreased to the level of 3-4 billion dollars in the early 2000s.³⁹ Plus, tourism revenues should be considered as another channel for Russians to contribute to evening out the trade deficit. The 3.6 million tourists that visited Turkey in 2012 probably generated around \$3 billion.⁴⁰ In this sense, 35-40% of the \$19 billion trade deficit is financed via different transactions like tourism, shuttle trade and other transactions between Russia and Turkey.

In addition, Russian firms perceive Turkey as a promising market and Russian Yandex's investment in Turkey's telecommunication sector can be analyzed in this context. Yandex has 14 offices in six different countries, Turkey being one. It opened its Istanbul office in 2011. The Russian company's search engine already has 1% of the market share in Turkey.⁴¹ Even though the scale of investment is low compared to other sectors, the crucial point is that Istanbul seems to be the main branch of one of the most successful Russian brands in the innovation sector. Moreover, the company also pays Turkish corporate taxes as a symbol of goodwill.⁴²

In contrast, Turkish firms have signed contracts in Russia worth \$3.64 billion in 2012. The total amount of contracts between 1972 and 2012 is estimated to be around \$39

billion.⁴³ Apart from the contracts signed in Russia, the total investments from Turkish companies in Russia are estimated to be around \$7-8 billion.⁴⁴ One leading sector is domestic appliances and electronics. Beko and Vestel have become two brands with 10% market shares in Russia. Turkish firms are also present in the chemical manufacturing, construction, textile, and beverage sectors, among others. One of the main areas of concentration is finance and there are seven banks operating in Russia: Yapı Kredi Moscow, Garanti Bank, Denizbank (which merged with Sberbank in 2012), Credit Europe Bank (formerly known as Finansbank), Ziraat Bank, Procommerce Bank and Türkiye İş Bankası (CJSC Sofia Bank).

Graph 4. Turkey's Top Foreign Trading Partners



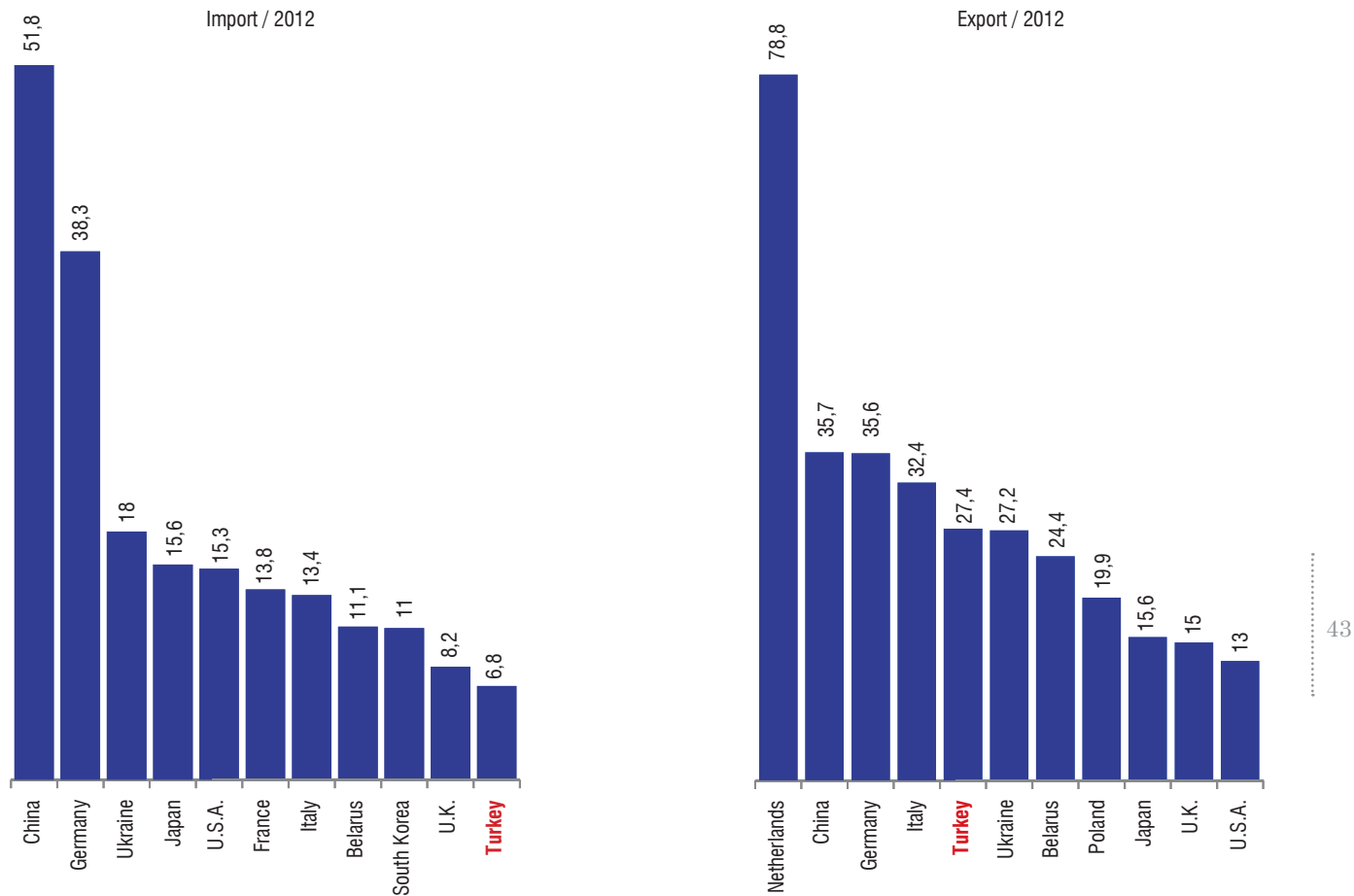
Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

Looking at the overall picture, Russian and Turkish economies complement each other. Currently, the level of bilateral trade totals \$40 billion -still far- from the target of \$100 billion. In order to reach \$100 billion both parties should focus on different areas of cooperation to diversify and deepen trade.

As of 2012, neither Russia nor Turkey has a trade volume of \$100 billion with any of their trade partners. Yet, the volume of Russia's bilateral trade is steadily growing. Russia's trade performance with China (\$87.5 billion) and Germany (\$74 billion) is

admirable. Turkey's too has trade a trade volume of more than \$20 billion with four countries (Russia, Germany, China and Iran). These numbers are promising for the future of international trade in both countries.

Graph 5. Russia's Top Foreign Trading Partners



Source: Russian Federation Customs Service

Apart from diversifying areas of cooperation, there is a need to diversify the location and character of investment. Russia's recent openings in Turkey's financial and telecommunication sectors are encouraging examples. Moreover, Turkish entrepreneurs' investments in the eastern Russia are important moves, yet not yet enough. Particularly, Russian and Turkish entrepreneurs might work in Siberia, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan, where there are cities with populations over one million like Novosibirsk, Omsk, Kazan and Ufa. Moreover, Russian and Turkish entrepreneurs could expand to sectors other than construction and tourism. Recently, Turkish entrepreneurs have been increasingly interested in different sectors. Boydak Holding's \$35 million investment target in the furniture sector and Hayat Holding's investments of \$500 million in Tatarstan's in wood and paper industry are examples of this recent trend.

Software and hardware sectors can be potential areas of cooperation. Considering the global potential, these sectors are promising areas of innovation, and Turkey and

Russia have started to focus on them. Russia and Turkey have started to focus on these promising areas of innovation areas, considering the potential in the global scale. Russia is giving the utmost importance to building a silicon valley in the Skolkovo region close to Moscow. Turkey, for its part, has some initiatives in Ankara, İstanbul and İzmit to develop IT technology sites.

All in all, there is a need for stimulating dialogue between business circles and other groups along with bilateral relations. In this sense, institutional mechanisms created after the 1991 period serve this goal. This dialogue, however, is not necessarily limited to large scale companies. Considering Turkey's advantage in small and medium-scale companies, dialogue should be stimulated at a smaller scale as well.

3. Institutional Mechanisms between Russia and Turkey

One of the main advantages in Turkey-Russia relations is the institutional mechanisms that provide sound platforms for enhancing dialogue. There is a continuous dialogue between bureaucrats and politicians within the framework of the Joint Economic Commission and the High Level Turkish-Russian Cooperation Council (HLLC). As these platforms have become institutionalized they have helped the two states to keep dialogue channels open even during times of regional and global crisis.

3.1 The Joint Economic Commission

Efforts of building institutional mechanisms between Turkey and Russia go back to 1960s. Back then the Soviet Union and Turkish Republic signed the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement in 25 March, 1967. Following this agreement, Turkey and the USSR signed an agreement to continue cooperation in the economic sphere in 9 July 1975.⁴⁵

Table 5. Meetings of Joint Economic Commission

1.	2-6 November 1992	Ankara
2.	1-6 April 1994	Moscow
3.	4-7 November 1997	Ankara
4.	1-5 November 1999	Moscow
5.	20-23 October 2000	Ankara
6.	29-30 November 2004	Moscow
7.	30 May 2006	İstanbul
8.	27-28 May 2008	Moscow
9.	3-6 August 2009	Ankara
10.	5-6 May, 2010	Ankara
11.	2-4 March 2011	Kazan
12.	18-20 April 2013	Antalya

These agreements were signed during the Cold War period, while the USSR and Turkey were situated in opposite blocs. Yet, Turkey and Russia decided to establish a joint commission and the first meeting of the commission convened in Moscow in December 1976.⁴⁶ Between then and 1989 the commission convened a total of 12 times.⁴⁷

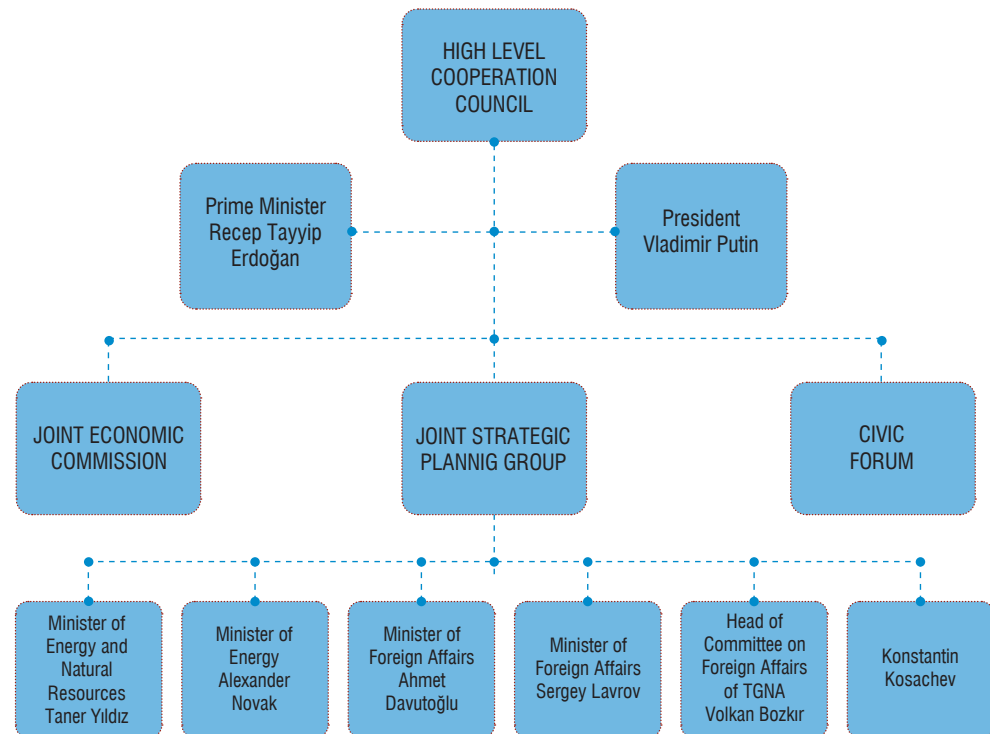
Later, Turkey signed another agreement with the USSR just before its dissolution on 25 February 1991.⁴⁸ The agreement was mainly an expression of goodwill between the parties and one of the main texts that paved the way for continuous economic cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Turkish Republic. Following the dissolution of the USSR, Russia and Turkey showed their decisiveness for cooperation in the new term. Moscow and Ankara exchanged an official letter in 1992 showing their political will to continue the natural gas trade, which was first established in the 1984 agreement.⁴⁹ Moreover, the parties agreed to form a commission called the Joint Economic Commission in an agreement signed in May 1992. In fact, this commission is supposed to replace the mechanism that was created in 1975. It is presumed that the commission will get together at least once in a year under the leadership of the ministers appointed by the Turkish and Russian governments. The working principle of the commission is to find new ways to develop bilateral trade through encouraging private companies and business circles. As of 2013, the co-chairmen of the commission are Ministers of Energy of Russia and Turkey, Alexander Novak and Taner Yıldız.

The Joint Economic Commission has convened 12 times since 1992. As there were only four meetings between 1992 and 1999, meetings have become more frequent after 2000. During these meetings, the parties have mainly discussed the natural gas trade, cooperation in electricity generation, the iron-steel industry, and the transportation, mining, technology, tourism, and health sectors. In the 1999 meeting the Turkish side declared its support for Russia's membership to the World Trade Organization and Eximbank Credits for over \$350 million worth of investments in Russia.⁵⁰ This commission paved the way for other mechanisms to be formed in time. A week before President Dimitri Medvedev's visit to Turkey on 11-12 May, 2010, the commission convened for the 10th time to discuss possible areas of cooperation. They prepared a declaration for the formation of the High Level Cooperation Council. In this context, the meetings of Joint Economic Commission have begun to function as preliminary meetings to the summits of Russian and Turkish leaders.

3. 2 High Level Cooperation Council

Bilateral relations have deepened as the economic relations and shuttle diplomacy gained impetus particularly in the 2000s. Moreover, Russia and Turkey had to become more engaged with the developments in the Eurasian region and the global economy. In this regard, the dialogue between Russia and Turkey has become more sophisticated as the leaders have started to talk about political developments and regional crises during their visits. There have been certain critical junctures in bilateral relations like the "1 March Bill" and the Russian-Georgian War in 2008 that helped build confidence between the two powers.⁵¹

The parties decided to establish the HLCC as a mechanism to institutionalize this dialogue at the 10th Joint Economic Commission. The council's first meeting was held during President Dimitri Medvedev's visit to Turkey. During this visit, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Dimitri Medvedev inked 16 documents and the HLLC was officially established. Both parties agreed to meet at the highest executive power level (Russian President and Turkish Prime Minister) annually, alternating between Russia and Turkey. Moreover, among other cooperation areas, two critical agreements were signed regarding the building of a nuclear power plant in Mersin Akkuyu and the creation of a visa-free regime.



The structure of the High Level Cooperation Council is composed of three mechanisms. These mechanisms are supposed to function as dialogue and working channels to bring different groups together before the leaders' summit.

In this regard, the Joint Economic Commission is the oldest among these mechanisms. The Joint Strategic Planning Group (JSPG) and the Civic Forum are relatively new mechanisms. The former is co-headed by the foreign ministers of both countries and convened three times, in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

The first meeting of JSPG was held in Istanbul on 20 January 2011. The protocol states that the parties convene at least once in a year. Moreover, the parties agreed to develop cooperation on regional and global issues like counter-terrorism, European security, non-proliferation, and illegal trafficking.

The second meeting took place in Moscow on 25 January 2012. The ministers discussed energy, tourism, and regional issues. Moreover, the parties agreed to cooperate in the

G20 summits considering that Russia and Turkey will chair the G20 in 2013 and 2015, respectively. Actually, Russia and Turkey have shown good performances in tackling economic challenges in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Considering their accumulated experience during the previous crises and 2008 there is room for further cooperation on economic level with their presence in G20.

The third meeting was held in Istanbul on 17 April 2013. One of the main issues that dominated the agenda was the crisis in Syria, but the parties also discussed issues related to energy cooperation, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and other regional topics. Moreover, Davutoğlu and Lavrov supported dialogue between the Presidency of the Religious Affairs of the Turkish Republic and the Russian Orthodox Church within the framework of the Civic Forum. This is one of the more inspiring attempts of the two countries considering the rising concerns about fanaticism and extremism in global scale.

Turkey and Russia share many platforms in the international level. In this sense, the regular dialogue between ministers and bureaucrats serves their common agendas and foster a common language for regional crises. Still, Russia and Turkey do not yet cooperate in an efficient manner in several crises. Syria is one of the recent examples, but still the parties have successfully kept dialogue channels open as the now institutionalized meetings are held regularly. In this way political leaders found the chance to share each other's position directly without any intermediaries.

The Civic Forum aims to expand dialogue on the social level. The Forum is a venue for scientists, businessmen, artists, intellectuals, and representatives of civil society organizations. Participants are expected to naturally create joint commissions to discuss issues of interest. In this regard the Forum aims to end the political and bureaucratic elite's monopoly on interaction.

The Forum's road map was officially drawn and accepted during the third HLCC during Putin's visit to Istanbul in 2012. Ambassador Volkan Bozkır, Head of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), and Konstantin Kosachev, Head of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) have been named co-chairs of the Forum. Preparations on sub-committees are still underway and the Forum is expected to start working officially in 2013.

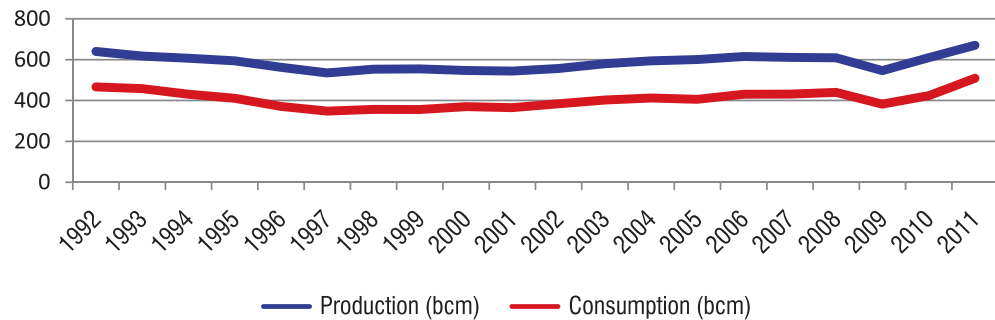
4. Energy

Energy is one of the main areas of cooperation between Russia and Turkey. Their geographic proximity to each other and Turkey's poverty in energy resources along with Russian energy abundance have elevated the importance of energy in bilateral relations over the last 30 years. Russia has the world's biggest natural gas reserves and second biggest coal reserves.⁵² Even though its oil reserves are ninth in size, it (along with Saudi Arabia) is the world leader in production. The Turkish-Russian energy trade is thus based on natural gas, oil, and nuclear technology.

4.1 Natural Gas

Controlling the vast amount of hydrocarbon reserves, Russia is one of Europe's main energy suppliers. The top three consumers of Russian gas are Germany, Turkey, and Italy respectively. Even though it is one of Europe's main natural gas suppliers, Russia is also a main consumer of Central Asian gas. In 2011 Russia imported 42.3 billion m³ (bcm) of gas, consumed 509.01 bcm, and produced a total of 670.01 bcm. Though Russia is a big natural gas consumer as well as a supplier, it is still a major net gas exporter.

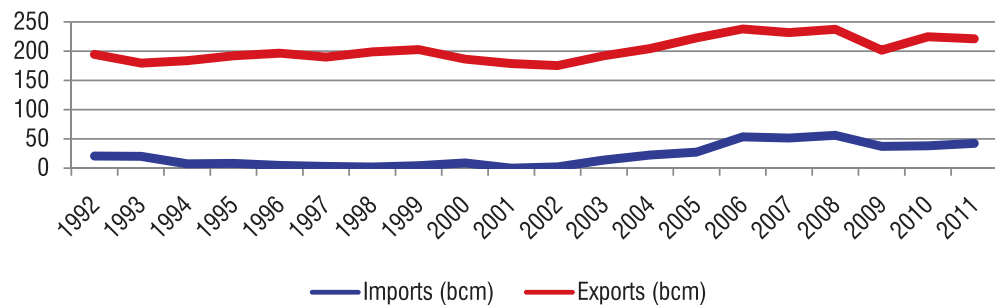
Graph 6. Russian Natural Gas Production and Consumption (1992-2011)



Source: International Energy Statistics

As indicated above, Turkey is the second biggest market for Russian energy giant Gazprom.⁵³ By supplying 27.02 of the 45.2 bcm of natural gas that Turkey consumed in 2012, Russia's market share in Turkey is 59.8%. Turkey's other suppliers are Iran (19%), Azerbaijan (9%), Algeria (9%), Nigeria (3%), and spot LNG market (2%).⁵⁴

Graph 7. Russian Natural Gas Export and Import (1992-2011)

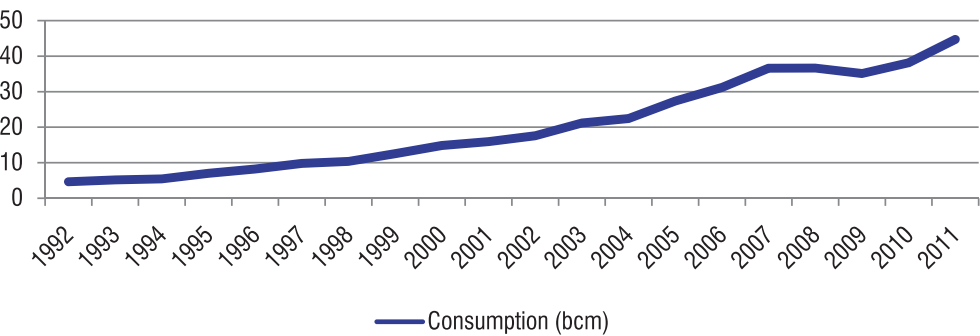


Source: International Energy Statistics

The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey has set several strategic targets for 2015. Based on these targets, Turkish authorities aim to decrease the Russia's natural gas market share in Turkey down to 50% in natural gas import of Turkey.⁵⁵ Actually, the Russian share fell from 66% in 2005 to 59.8 % in 2012, despite increasing imports from 18 to 27.2 bcm. These statistics shows that Turkish consumption is increasing and Turkey is lessening risks to its supply by diversifying its energy suppliers. But this does

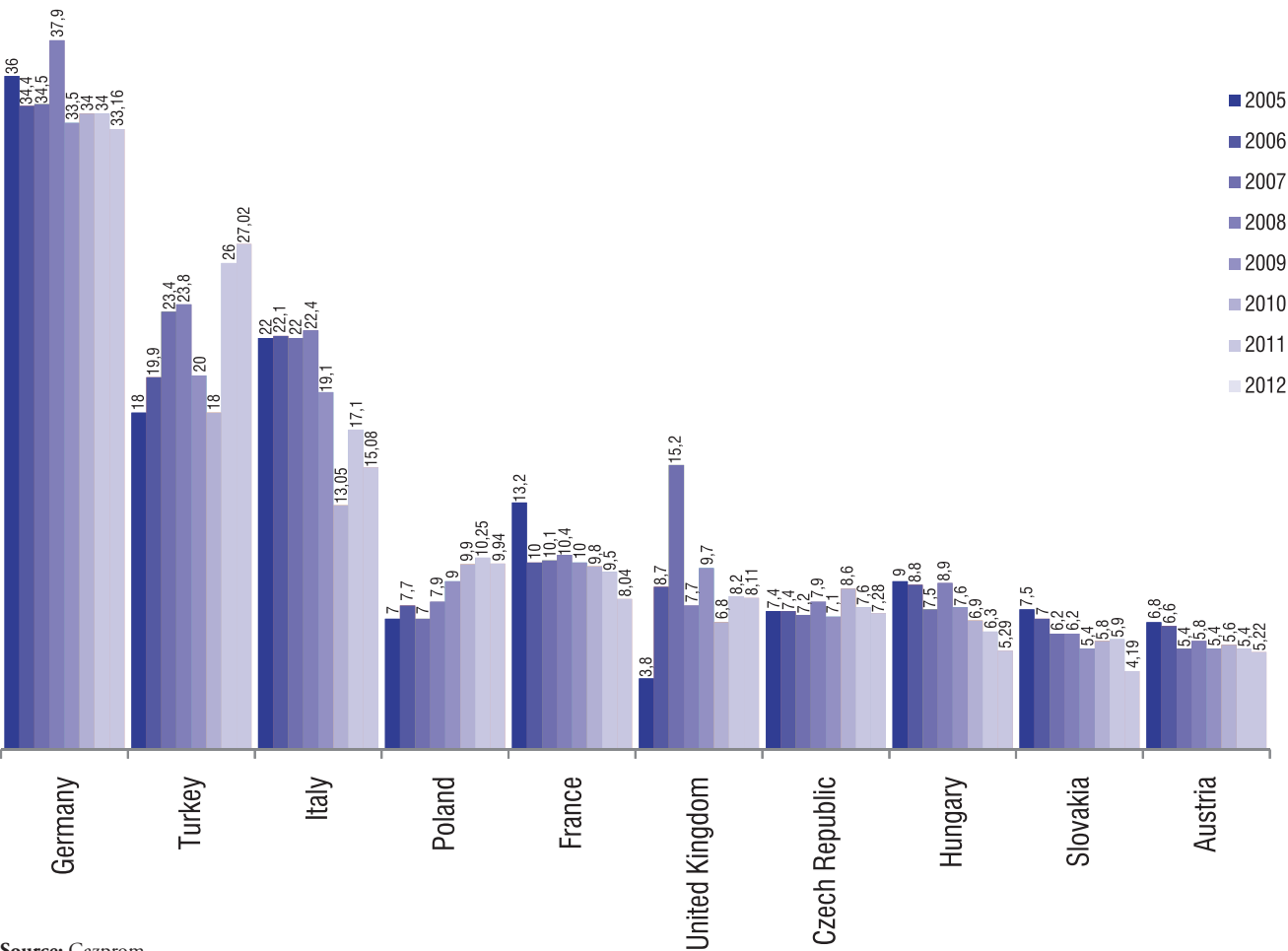
not necessarily mean that the amount of gas imported from any of Turkey's partners is decreasing. Rather, Turkey seeks new suppliers as it increases consumption. In this context Russia will maintain its importance for Turkey as a natural gas supplier in the future.

Graph 8. Turkey's Natural Gas Consumption (1992-2011)



Source: International Energy Statistics

Graph 9. Gazprom's Natural Gas Export to Europe (bcm)



Source: Gazprom

Looking at the past, Turkish-Russian cooperation in natural gas goes back to the 1980s. The USSR and Turkey first signed a 25-year agreement in 1984 and according to this the supply of natural gas was planned to start in 1987 with 1.5 bcm initially.⁵⁶ The agreement has a barter character in that Turkey pays for natural gas from the USSR with cotton, meat, corn, vegetable oil, industrial goods, steel, and non-steel products.

This agreement introduced clean energy to Turkey and in time Turkey's consumption increased from 1.5 bcm to 45 bcm. The capacity and the number of the pipelines coming from Russia continued to increase even while Turkey inked agreements with other countries. Looking at the past, Turkey's energy cooperation with Russia has become an important field and it has become one of the business sectors that has contributed to building trust. Turkey is one of the most reliable customers for Russia and Russia is a reliable supplier for Turkey. In fact, Russia sent extra gas to close the supply gap when the flow of gas from Iran or Azerbaijan was interrupted to Turkey.

The two states have started to cooperate in other areas of natural gas in the second decade of the 2000s. First, Turkey gave permission to Russia make the necessary feasibility studies in its exclusive economic zone in the Black Sea for its multi-billion dollar South Stream Natural Gas Pipeline Project during Putin's visit to Ankara in 2009.⁵⁷ Later, Turkey gave permission for the pipeline's construction during Taner Yıldız's December 2011 visit to Moscow. This was an important signal to Russia that Turkey is not an obstacle, but a reliable potential partner not only in bilateral terms, but also at the regional level. Russia wants to diversify the pipelines reaching Europe. In 2012 Russia completed the Nord Stream pipeline with a capacity of 55 bcm.⁵⁸ The South Stream pipeline is the next pipeline project that will transmit Russian gas to Eastern Europe.

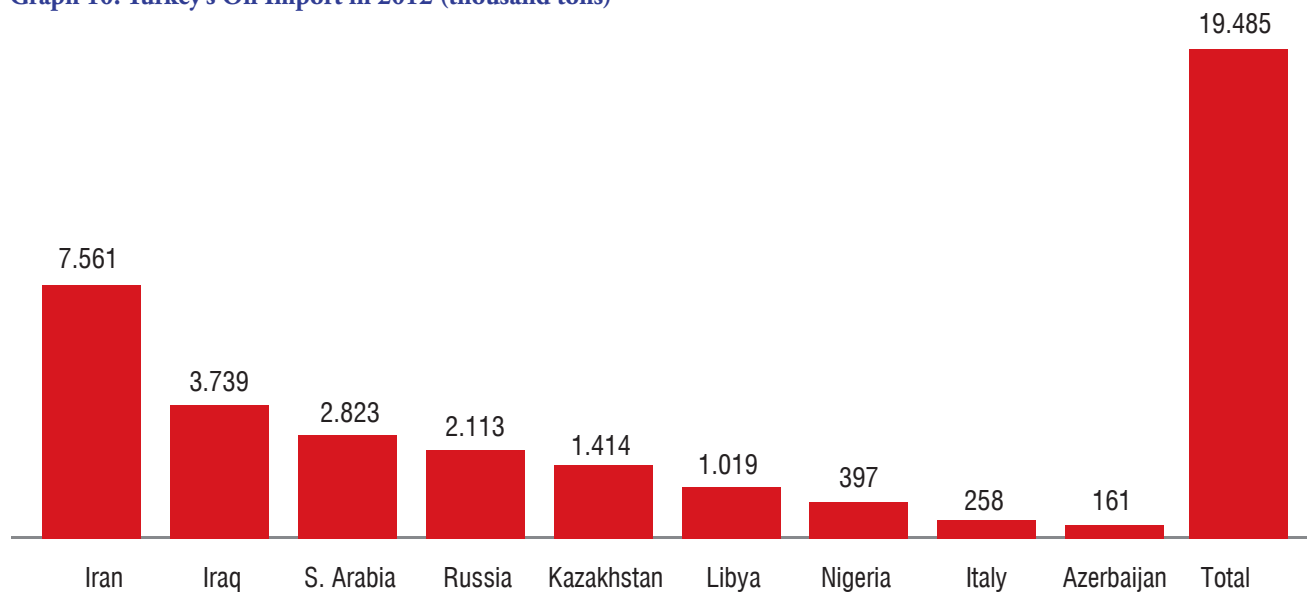
Second, the state companies of Gazprom and Botaş used to coordinate the natural gas trade. In line with the liberalization of Turkey's energy market, the 6 bcm contract between Botaş and Gazprom was not renewed in 2011 as Turkey agreed to hand over this trade to private sector companies. Four companies took licenses from the Turkish Energy Market Regulation Authority. These companies are Akfel (2.25 bcm), Bosphorus Gaz (1.75 bcm), Kibar Enerji (1 bcm) and Batı Hattı Doğalgaz (1 bcm). Based on this restructuring between Turkey and Russia, a crucial step was taken towards the liberalization of Turkish energy market and Turkish private companies started to cooperate in larger extent with Gazprom.

4. 2 Oil

Turkey imported almost 19.5 million tons of oil in 2012. Turkey's top three oil providers are Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. According to 2012 statistics, Russia is the fourth biggest oil supplier with its export of 2.1 million tons (11% of total imports of Turkey).

The Turkish Çalık and Russian Rosneft signed a cooperation agreement in 2012 at the third HLCC. In the agreement both companies committed to deepening their cooperation in Mediterranean region oil distribution and fuel sales to the marine vehicles.⁵⁹

Graph 10. Turkey's Oil Import in 2012 (thousand tons)



Source: Turkish Energy Market Regulatory Authority

Apart from this recent development, one of the main projects on the table is the Samsun-Ceyhan Crude Oil pipeline project. The projected capacity of the pipeline is 60 million tons. The main aim of the pipeline is to decrease transit traffic on the straits and reach the Mediterranean market by bypassing the Aegean Sea. The project's partners are ENI and Çalık Holding. The Turkish side shared its position regarding the pipeline in 2005 during the Joint Economic Commission.⁶⁰ Later, negotiations over an Intergovernmental Agreement started in 2010. Turkey and Russia stated once again their political will for the project in the Protocol on Cooperation in Oil Sector in 2011.⁶¹ Yet, the project is still in the negotiation phase, according to Aleksander Novak, the parties have not been able to reach an agreement on the amount for a transit fee.⁶² The Russian-Turkish hydrocarbon trade represents a multi-billion dollar sector. However, cooperation is mainly limited to the Turkish market if one ignores some recent developments.⁶³ Botaş and TPAO's operations are not linked to Russian companies in any markets outside Turkey. One of the main limitations is the capacity of Turkish corporations. Recently, however, Turkey has shown the political will to promote Turkish energy companies abroad. In this regard, there is room for cooperation in terms of technique-sharing and collaboration with Russian companies on different projects, particularly in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Africa. There is strong collaboration between ENI and Gazprom or Russia and Germany in the energy business. Considering their sound partnership, Turkish and Russian companies should find areas to enrich the framework of cooperation in the energy sector as well.

There is even a legal framework for this. The parties signed a protocol to deepen their energy cooperation on 10 March, 2011.⁶⁴ Based on this agreement, the parties agree to promote initiatives on cooperation in upstream and downstream. There are serious advances like contract handovers from Botaş to private sector as well as Çalık and Rosneft cooperation in the Mediterranean Basin. Moreover, Lukoil's entering into the

retail fuel market in Turkey is another advantage. However, the level of cooperation has not reached to its limits considering the regional cooperation. Recent initiatives in Iraq are just a beginning, but it should be expanded. As Russian energy companies take an active role in Turkey the level of cooperation in the Middle East and Africa has a more room to go for Turkish-Russian consortiums.

4. 3 Nuclear Energy

Russia and Turkey signed several agreements concerning nuclear technology development and technique sharing in 2009.⁶⁵ Following these agreements Russia and Turkey agreed to build a nuclear power plant in Mersin-Akkuyu during the first HLLC in 2010. The power plant is composed of four reactors, 1200 MW each, giving it a capacity of 4800 MW.⁶⁶ The project's coordinating authorities are the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and the Russian Rosatom. The Russian company is supposed to hold 100% of the shares and its share cannot be less than 51%. The Russian side will be responsible for managing radioactive waste, dismantling the nuclear power plant, and training the Turkish staff who will be employed in the facilities. In return, Turkey promises to buy electricity from the facilities for 15 years at the price of 12.35-dollar cent/KWh.⁶⁷ Upon completion, the plant is planned to produce about 35 billion kWh of electrical energy per year and the plant's operation life will be 60 years. Construction is scheduled to start in 2014 and be completed in 2019. Though the plant is expected to cost \$20 billion, the General Manager of Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant Inc. Alexander Superfin stated that Turkish firms could provide \$7.5 billion of the cost. This means a new opportunity for the Turkish industry. At this stage, Rosatom has transferred \$700 million in capital and an additional transfer of \$800 million is expected in the coming period.⁶⁸

The project's contractor, Atomstroyexport, opened the Community Information Centre to inform the Mersin public in December 2012. Anyone seeking information about nuclear energy or the Akkuyu Nuclear Plant can receive it at the Centre. Akkuyu NGS Inc is in charge of raising awareness and informing journalists, businessmen, and various non-governmental organizations through panels and visits.⁶⁹ This is a crucial step since a lack of the necessary information among the Turkish public inhibits nuclear power plant construction, not to mention the dissuasive traumas of Fukushima and Chernobyl.

The Russian side is also training the Turkish personnel who will work in the project. Currently 114 Turkish students are studying nuclear engineering in Russia. According to the contract signed by the students, the students are obliged to start working in the nuclear power plant project after completing their education. The Russian side will cover the training costs of these students.⁷⁰

Turkey intends to continue building nuclear power plants. The next nuclear power plant is to be constructed in Sinop with a capacity of 4500 MW by a Japanese-French consortium for \$22 billion. The agreement with Russia was a reference point for Turkey's negotiations on the Sinop plant. The strength of the Russian project is the capital inflow through a foreign direct investment from Russia along with share of know-how via training of Turkish students in Russia. A similar, but a modified model was agreed upon for Sinop. And another similar model will likely be framed for Turkey's third nuclear power plant.

On the other hand, constructing a nuclear power plant is an important credit for Rosatom as the projects is being implemented in a European country. Considering the financial and security dimension of the project, both countries have a strong interest in completing the project on time and without delay.

3 SOCIAL RELATIONS

Politics and economy are important components of the bilateral relations. However, social interactions have taken precedence over political relations as interaction between societies and individuals has developed tremendously.

In this part of the report these dimensions of Turkish-Russian relations will be scrutinized. In this regard, this part is composed of three parts namely, tourism, education and culture.

1. Tourism

Tourism has not only become a significant source of economic gain, but also introduced Turkish and Russian people to each other. Increased with mutual visits, social interactions have become a factor serving to reduce prejudices, which was shaped by the Cold War dynamics. Historically, Russia's quest to gain access to warm waters has been replaced by security and economic cooperation with Turks in the Black Sea. The 21st century has seen high growth in Mediterranean and Aegean tourism.

Tourism has also had a transformative, positive impact on the Turkey-Russia political and economic relations. In recent years, the high revenues that Turkey has earned from this sector have led to Turkish authorities' assessing tourism as a priority in negotiations with their Russian counterparts. Russian authorities have also discussed tourism in bilateral meetings with their Turkish counterparts to attract more tourists and investment from Turkey. If prospective Turkish investment in Russia is taken into consideration -as in case of Sochi- it will be seen better that tourism sector as a part of strategic cooperation can be an opportunity to further mutual benefits for both countries. This momentum in tourism promotion led to the end of the visa requirement in 2011.⁷¹ The abolition of visas between the two countries is regarded as a revolutionary event in the 500 year-old of Turkish-Russian relations. It was a watershed development that the two countries that just 20 years ago were in opposite political blocs had started to stimulate mobility between their societies by removing the visa requirement. In this respect, tourism is an area deserving special focus at the axis of two countries' relations.

1.1 Deepening Relations with Mutual Visits

As foreign tourism in Turkey has boomed in the last decade, the number of Russian tourists has also grown. While the total number of foreign visitors to Turkey increased by 127% between 2003 and 2012, the number of arrivals from Russia increased 181%. In the same period, the share of Russian tourists visiting Turkey in the total number of incoming foreign visitors to Turkey has also showed an increase, climbing from 9.13% to 11.33%. The aggregate tourism revenues of Turkey surpassed \$29.351 billion in 2012, according to the revised statistics.⁷² Taking into account the fact that average per capita spending for the foreigners who visited Turkey last year amounted to \$798⁷³, it can be estimated that Turkey earned approximately \$3 billion from Russian tourists. It is quite remarkable that Russian tourists have increased despite the economic crisis.

Table 6. The Numbers of Incoming Visitors to Turkey from Russia by Year⁷⁴

Year	Total Number of Incoming Visitors to Turkey	Incoming Visitors from Russia	Percentage of Russians
2003	14.029.558	1.281.407	9.13
2004	17.516.908	1.605.006	9.16
2005	21.124.886	1.864.682	8.83
2006	19.819.833	1.853.442	9.35
2007	23.340.911	2.465.336	10.6
2008	26.336.677	2.879.278	10.9
2009	27.077.114	2.694.733	9.95
2010	28.632.204	3.107.043	10.85
2011	31.456.076	3.468.214	11.03
2012	31.782.832	3.599.925	11.33

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey

Even though the sector faced a small contraction in 2009 compared to the year before, it was able to recover quickly. Three factors played an important role in this quick comeback. First of all, Turkey and Russia have rapidly recovered from the negative impacts of the global financial crisis. Therefore, the quick recovery stopped Russians from cutting back on recreation and travel expenditures. Secondly, the Turkish tourism sector offers attractions unavailable in Spain, Greece, and other close tourist hubs. Third, many Russian tourists who used to go to Middle Eastern and North African countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, have been dissuaded by the instability caused by the Arab Spring and have since begun choosing Turkey instead. This may seem to be a temporary situation, but if thoroughly exploited it may pave the way for various long-term investments targeting Russian tourists in Turkey.

Currently, only Germany sends more tourists to Turkey than Russia. 3.6 million Russian tourists chose Turkey as their vacation destination in 2012 while the number of German tourists was slightly over 5 million.⁷⁵ However, considering the growth trend and the positive impacts of the visa free regime, Russia may surpass Germany soon.

From Russia's perspective, Turkey has maintained its position as the most preferred touristic destination. According to statistics from the Russian Federal Tourism Agency, the total number of Russian tourists who went abroad in 2012 is around 15.3 million; the number of people who went to Turkey only for touristic purposes was more than 2.5 million (16.4%).⁷⁶ Greece and Spain, two of Turkey's European rivals, have been made less attractive by the European financial crisis and the difficulty of getting a visa.

Visitors who go to Russia from Turkey constitute the other side of the bilateral travel coin. Contrary to Russian travelers who mostly come to Turkey for vacation, Turkish businessmen have generally travelled to Russia on business trips and to explore investment opportunities. For this reason, Russia evaluates its travel relations with Turkey in the context of both tourism and investment. The significance of the business dimension can be better understood if it is taken into consideration the fact that the volume of projects Turkish contractors undertook in Russia only in 2012 is \$3.64 billion and that the total value of the insofar investments and the projects made by Turkish businessmen has reached to \$39 billion.⁷⁷ To illustrate it, only 100.918 out of 305.429 Turkish citizens traveled to Russia with touristic purposes in 2012.⁷⁸ Before the lifting of the visa barrier the number of Turkish tourists coming to Russia was much lower. After the April 2011 abolition of visa requirements for short-term visits, we observe a 79% increase in tourists from Turkey to Russia from 2010 to 2012. At the same time, the number of total Turkish citizens visiting Russia increased more than 55% between 2010 and 2012.⁷⁹

Even though these figures indicate that trade comes ahead of tourism in the visits of Turkish citizens to Russia, it is expected that the share of tourism will increase more in the near future thanks to visa-free travel. But still there is a need for further stimulators, Russian and Turkish tour operators, for instance, could create attractive tour packages. Turkish people's affinity for cultural tours is already clear in Eastern European destinations; Russian cultural tours would likely see similar success.

So far, however, Russia has not been successful in attracting a sufficient amount of Turkish tourists. Although there has been an increase in tourist flow from Turkey to Russia in recent years, the amount is still very low. In fact, Russia does not seem to be an attractive touristic destination for foreigners from all over the world. Only 2.570.469 (9.1%) of the 28.176.502 visitors who came to Russia in 2012 came for tourism.⁸⁰ And this ratio has stayed relatively steady over the last 10 years. Taking this fact into consideration, Turkey sent the 7th most tourists to Russia in 2012, whereas it is 18th in terms of total number of visitors.⁸¹

Table 7. The Numbers of Incoming Visitors to Russia from Turkey by Year⁸²

Year	Total Number of Incoming Visitors to Russia	Incoming Visitors from Turkey	Percentage of Turks
2003	22.514.000	139.745	0.6
2004	22.051.000	178.343	0.8
2005	22.176.000	198.151	0.9
2006	22.452.000	213.306	0.95
2007	22.908.625	237.116	1.0
2008	23.676.140	239.095	1.0
2009	21.338.650	177.332	0.8
2010	22.281.217	196.704	0.9
2011	24.932.061	249.109	1.0
2012	28.176.502	305.429	1.1

Source: Federal Agency for Tourism of Ministry for Culture of the Russian Federation, Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TURSAB)

But the majority of visits from Turkey to Russia still belongs to Turkish companies, businessmen and employees. It is estimated that Turkish construction firms, which increased their investments in Russia especially during 2000s, have also upped the number of business and vacation visits to the country. However, these companies reduced their spending and even laid off some of their workers in 2009, when the global financial crisis's effects were felt most severely. The trend was reversed when the Russian economy experienced a quick recovery and Russia became an attractive market for Turkish investment once more. Then, visitor numbers rebounded to pre-crisis levels in 2011.

Taking the fact into account that the total number of visits in 2012 from Turkey to the other countries in the world including Russia was 5.802.950⁸³, it is hard to say that Russia can take the advantage of this mobility for its own sake. Even though the percentage of incoming visitors from Turkey to Russia was very low, around 1.1%, 5.3% of Turkish tourists chose to go to Russia in 2012. It is understandable that Turks mostly visit European countries such as Germany, Bulgaria and Northern Cyprus⁸⁴, since there are huge numbers of Turks living in those countries. However, it is expected that more Turkish tourists will turn to Russia in response to the visa-free regime and developing economic relations. Business-oriented visits are also expected to increase in the following years.

1. 2 Diversification of Transportation

As the mobility between the societies increases, the psychological distance between the two countries declines and transportation develops in parallel. Currently, Turkish companies like Turkish Airlines, Anadolujet, and Pegasus Airlines conduct scheduled flights between the two countries to many different locations. As of 2013, there are flights to Moscow 6 times a day (4 times from İstanbul, and once from Ankara and Antalya), up from Turkish Airlines once daily flight from İstanbul in 2005. As of 2012 the total number of Turkish Airlines' weekly flights to Russia during the winter is 68,

including 8 different destinations: Moscow (42 times per week), St. Petersburg (4), Kazan (4), Sochi (3), Ufa (5), Rostov (3), Yekaterinburg (4) and Novosibirsk (3).⁸⁵ During the summer period, the number increases by 85-90, with Antalya seeing the biggest increase in flights. Again, Turkish Airlines has increased its passenger capacity from 60.000 to 800.000 per year during the time period from 2005 to 2013.⁸⁶ Pegasus Airlines organizes three flights each to the cities of Omsk and Krasnodar every week. There are many other airline companies who organize non-scheduled (charter) flights, as well.

There are also Russian-based companies flying to Turkey, including Aeroflot, UTair, Rusline, Kuban Airlines, Grozny Avia Airlines and Saratov Airlines. Aeroflot flies to İstanbul and Ankara, UTair flies from Sochi to Trabzon, Rusline Airlines has flights from İstanbul to Makhachkala, MineralnyeVody, and Volgograd, Kuban Airlines organizes charter flights as well as regular flights between Krasnodar and Samsun, and Grozny Airlines connects the cities of Grozny, Vladikavkaz, and Makhachkala to İstanbul. All of this air traffic between the two countries has had a remarkable contribution to the cooperation in the field of tourism. As large as this growth in air travel is, its potential level is much higher. But getting the necessary permits to operate more direct flights is the most challenging issue in this sector, where competition is inevitable. Turkish airline companies, especially, are faced with difficulties when they try to increase the number of flight quotas and destination points in Russia. Russia has a policy of flight quotas which are allocated specifically for big firms, and that's why the majority of Russian tourists come to Turkey on non-scheduled flights for their holidays. In 2011 the number of aircrafts which landed and took off between Turkey and Russia reached 22.992.⁸⁷ This rate constitutes 25.9% of the total number of foreign non-scheduled aircrafts, which landed and took off in Turkey in the same year. Importantly 2.157.592 Russian tourists were carried to Turkey with these non-scheduled flight aircrafts, making the number of passengers carried with these non-scheduled flights more than those who flew on scheduled flights.⁸⁸ Although the Turkish authorities have conveyed to their Russian counterparts their intention of upping the number of scheduled flights in meetings, this problem still irritates Turkish air carriers. As this issue provides economic benefits to both countries, there should be a special effort to prevent vicious competition between the two countries.

Black Sea transportation facilities are another area in need of diversification. They especially need to pay more attention to maritime transportation in addition to air transportation. Proliferation in land, sea and railway transportation will stimulate the two countries' tourism and also deepen trade relations particularly in the Black Sea region. Looking at tourism, it is observed that 97.8% (3.520.249) of the Russian tourists who visited Turkey in 2012 preferred to go by air, whereas 1.3% (47.878) by highway, 0.9% (31.761) by sea and <0.01% (37) by rail.⁸⁹

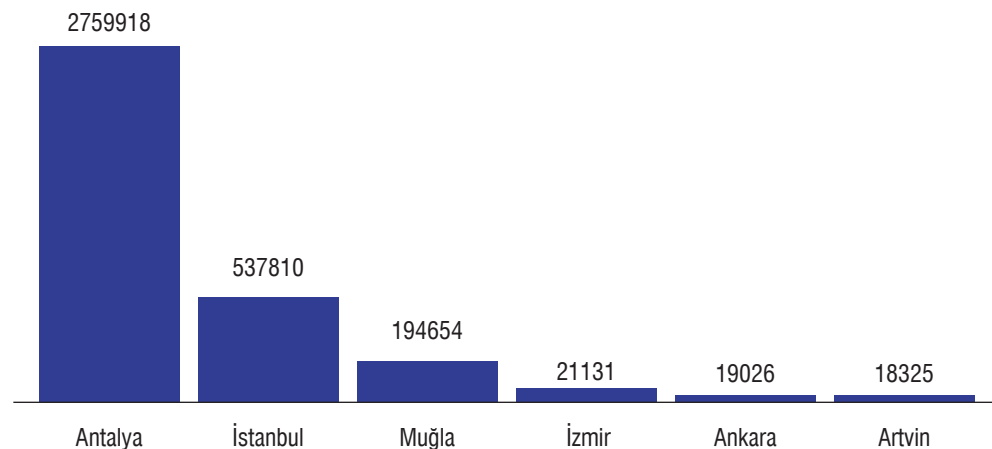
The reason why air travel is the most preferred form of transportation is the great geographical obstacle between their tourists' homes and their destinations, and the ease with which air travel disposes of them. Most Russian tourists come from Moscow and its peripheries, and tend to holiday in the south of Turkey. However, new highways and railways linking the Balkan and Caucasus regions will develop tourism in the Black

Sea region as well. Another topic authorities could approach in a project-oriented way is the development of maritime transportation. Ferries and other forms of maritime transportation coming online would promote Turkey-Russia tourism. Yet, there are certain problems with rail transport in the Caucasus, particularly with regards to Georgia as the railway link between Abkhazia and Georgia is closed. However, developing the new transportation such as sea and railway transportation links along with airlines will contribute to the regional development in the Caucasus and the Black Sea region.

In fact, there are also other missing parts of this momentum gained in the human mobility, which is mutually captured by two countries in the field of tourism. First of all, the vast majority of Russian tourists who come to Turkey for holiday purpose generally spend their time on the Mediterranean and the Aegean coasts. 99% of incoming Russian tourists' first destinations are limited to 6 out of 81 cities. Around 77% of Russian tourists' first destination is Antalya, with and 82% of them arriving between May and September. This shows that Turkey means sea, sand, and sun for Russian tourists. Most of the Russian tourists spend their time between hotel rooms and beaches. Therefore, Russian tourists are unable to get closely acquainted with Turkish culture. This situation is the result of agencies offering vacation packages with the "all inclusive" label, fixed tour programs, and tourists' desire to relax.

In this context, alternative programs and tours enriched with cultural activities like theater, music, and opera and also faith tourism activities would attract more Russian tourists. It's important to advertise the places bearing historical and religious significance for Russians such as the Sumela Monastery in the Black Sea region and the Akdamar Church at Van, East and Southeast Anatolia regions and the city of Kars, and tours to museums and historical sites and archeological excavations at Gaziantep and Mardin are also important. Apart from this, the Ministry of Tourism could organize programs on Turkish culture and cuisine that would help socialize the two societies and fight prejudice.

Graph 11. The First Destinations of Russian Visitors Coming to Turkey in 2012 ⁹⁰



Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey

On the other hand, there is no reliable information on the destinations of Turkish tourists in the Russian Federation. Based on the flight routes and ongoing investment projects, it is estimated that Turks mainly go to huge industrial, commercial, and touristic cities such as Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kazan, Vladimir, Ufa, Sochi, Rostov, and Krasnodar.

1. 3 Fragile Aspects and Possible Cooperation Areas

Injuries and deaths of tourists, which are the negative aspects of tourism, stand out as a sensitive issue on which two countries need to work on. According to the Consular General of the Russian Federation in Antalya, Alexander Tolstopyatenko, in total 58 Russian tourists lost their lives and 180 Russian tourists got injured in various accidents in between January and August 2011.⁹¹ The Consular General also stated that one-quarter of the deaths resulted from drowning and twelve resulted from traffic accidents.⁹²

From time to time some media organs exaggerate the negativities in the tourism sector and this causes twisted perceptions to gain ground in Russia towards Turkey. To minimize these negative perceptions, Turkey must especially intensify food and beverage regulation, inspect touristic facilities for their hygiene, strengthen emergency measures, and implement certification programs for tour-drivers, along with stricter traffic controls in touristic districts.

Along with these measures, communication between both countries' authorities should be speedy when Russian tourists have car accidents, injuries, alcohol or food poisoning, and so on. Reliable communication between authorities may minimize the unfavorable effects of negative news in the media. Otherwise, the problems that Russian tourists encounter in Turkey trigger already existent prejudices. News outlets may report issues as if there is already a crisis between the two countries. Communication problems between Turkish and Russian authorities in the aftermath of accidents and injuries also increase the likelihood that false information is disseminated. In that sense, it is important to share information with the Russian high-ranking authorities in a quicker and more professional way as well as serving reliable information to both countries' media services. In this context, especially for Russian media authorities and journalists Turkish officials can put into force some intellectual and alternative touristic programmes which will be so much functional and useful for the minimization of prejudices.

Besides, in the investigation of the murder of American Sarai Sierra in İstanbul, Turkish security forces demonstrated that they can work with foreign security services. Cooperation between Turkish and Russian security forces is also possible especially during the investigation phases of fatal incidents. This kind of cooperation will help information about sensational events flow responsibly from one country to another. The potential for these mechanisms -if working properly- to become a model for the Turkey-Russia relations in other areas should not be underestimated.

2. Education

Cooperation between Turkey and Russia on education is another field that can build long-term healthy relations based on mutual trust. The cooperation in the field of education will prepare the ground for building new constructive and positive paradigms at relations. However, discrepancies over the facts due to historical experiences limit the likelihood of cooperation in education. From this perspective, cooperation and joint projects in education is an issue that both Turkey and Russia must pay more attention in the years ahead.

2.1 Field Studies

The onset of studies on the Turkic World and Turkology at higher education institutions in Russia goes back to the end of the 18th century. The first studies began at Kazan Federal University and later spread to Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Over time, Russian universities have developed the discipline of Turkology intensively. Today there are 32 higher education institutions in Russia where studies are conducted on Turkish language, literature and also Turkey's history, economy, politics, and society. While 24 of these institutions have institutes or departments studying Turkey, 6 of them only teach the Turkish language. Apart from these, the Institute of Linguistics and the Institute of Oriental Studies, which are linked to the Russian Academy of Sciences, focus on Turkology. These institutes mostly concentrate on Anatolian languages and Turkey. 10 out of the 32 institutions are in Moscow, the rest are scattered over a variety of districts. Centers that give language courses are present in the universities in Moscow, Kazan, Kosturma, Omsk, Nizhny Novgorod, and Saratov.

There are higher education institutes in the country, which represent different streams of studies on Turkey. These are currently the regions of Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Caucasus/Ural (such as Kazan, Dagestan, Bashkortostan and Buryatia), and Siberia (such as Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg and Krasnoyarsk). These schools can also be classified according to the intensity of research in the fields of theory/practical applications, language/literature and history/politics. Currently, there are an estimated 150-200 Russian scholars who are experts on Turkey and work at these institutions. These institutions are also places where thousands of Turkologists have been trained. They also have postgraduate programmes. Each postgraduate student graduating from these programmes can be in fact regarded as an expert on Turkey, thanks to the highly qualified coursework on Turkish history, politics, language, and literature.

Contrary to the situation in Russia, Turkey seems to lag behind teaching the Russian language and training experts on Russian and Slavic studies. The infancy of expert-training on Russia in Turkey is the weakest chain today when we talk about the strategic partnership of these two countries. There are departments of Russian language and literature at the universities of Ankara, İstanbul, Erciyes, Anadolu, Atatürk, Selçuk, Fatih, Gazi, Kafkas and Avrasya. Furthermore, Russian language courses are given as electives at other universities, METU, Bilkent, Boğaziçi, Koç, TOBB and Okan Universities being some prominent examples. However, Russian language education and research on Russia remains underdeveloped in Turkey.

Unsurprisingly, there is a scarcity of academics and people who can speak Russian at an advanced level, as well as a scarcity of academic materials in Turkey. The lack of qualified teachers impacts the teaching of advanced-level Russian at universities. This is also the reason why literature is given more emphasis than the language itself. There are even instances that people who graduate from one of these Russian language programs and still having to attend Russian language preparation schools when they go to Russia. Finally, Russian history and cultural studies are lacking throughout Turkish universities. This is one of the reasons why experts on Russia cannot be professionally trained in Turkey. Cooperation on education can not only help to better relations between the two countries in a sustainable way, but also seems to be a necessity for developing more constructive, positive relations in general. Therefore, Turkish authorities should act soon to promote education-oriented projects to train highly-qualified Russian and Slavic studies experts.

2. 2 Student and Personnel Exchange

There is cooperation between two countries in education field, albeit limited. According to the statistics of Turkey's Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM), the number of Russian citizens who studied at Turkish universities in the 2011-2012 academic year was only 567.⁹³ There has been an increase in the number of Russian students in recent years, but the number still remains too low with respect to the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. For instance, the total number of Russians studying in Turkish universities peaked at 1004 students in the academic year of 1999-2000, but this number subsequently fell to 491 incrementally by 2008.⁹⁴

Significant contingents of the Russian students in Turkey have Tatar, Bashkir, Yakut, and other Turkic ethnic origins. In this sense, the numbers mentioned above does not exactly reflect the number of ethnic Russians choosing higher education in Turkey. Additionally, considering the total number of Russian students studying abroad was around 47.000 in 2011⁹⁵, the number of students who came to Turkey was rather low.

The picture is almost identical for Turkish students studying in Russia. According to official records regarding the 2012-2013 academic year, 481 Turkish students are pursuing their academic studies in Russia.⁹⁶ Most of Turkish exchange students in Russia are studying social sciences, economics, and business administration; a small amount of them study engineering, natural sciences, and medicine. While 410 of them are undergraduate students, the numbers of master and Ph.D students are 51 and 20, respectively. Some of the students are state scholarship recipients, while some of them are supporting themselves. A considerable proportion of the graduate exchange students chose universities around Moscow and Saint Petersburg while undergraduate students are more spread out. The cities with the most undergraduate students are Moscow (88), St. Petersburg (35), Kazan (45), Saratov (41), Nalchik (23), Belgorod (16), Nizhny Novgorod (14), Astrakhan (13) and Ufa (11).⁹⁷ As there are students who are not registered at the Education Counselor in Moscow, it is estimated that the number of Turkish citizens studying Russian higher education institutions is around 550-600.

As previously mentioned, there are Turkish students of nuclear technology in Russia as a part of the Mersin-Akkuyu nuclear power plant agreement. Currently, there are 114 students in the Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute (National Nuclear Research University). 66 of these students are registered for Russian language preparation classes and 48 of them are freshmen.⁹⁸ Considering the students who will be sent in the following years, the number of students is expected to reach to 600. When these students complete 7-year program, which comprises Russian language courses and engineering courses, they will work at the nuclear power plants being built.

According to the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey, the total number of students who studied abroad in the 2011-2012 academic year was 20.394⁹⁹, though this number does not cover the students who studied without the knowledge of Turkish authorities. Nevertheless, Russia is not a highly-preferred destination for Turkish exchange students. Yet, there is a significant number of students who wish to study abroad both in Turkey and Russia. This suggests that both countries must better advertise their universities and find more educational projects to cooperate on.

Until recently, one of the most important obstacles to cooperation in higher education between Russia and Turkey was the difficulty with which students obtained equivalency for their degrees. Even high school diplomas were oftentimes unrecognized. Many newly graduated students who returned to their homelands had to wait a long time to receive academic equivalency. This mutual problem stems from prejudiced authorities and differences in the two countries' education systems, and constituted the biggest obstacle to student exchange. In recent years some, albeit insufficient, progress has been achieved in removing the obstacles to equivalency.

Inter-university collaboration between Russia and Turkey is another weak part of education cooperation. Currently, there are many cooperation agreements, such as the agreements between the Moscow State University and Ankara University, the University of Economics and Technology (TOBB) and Akdeniz University, Saint Petersburg State University's agreement with Anadolu and Gazi Universities, and the Russian State University of Social Science's agreement with Kadir Has University. However, it seems that the student and faculty exchange programs are limited. A law regulating Russian higher education limits the studies of the foreign faculty members at Russian universities is the most important obstacle to deepened cooperation. In addition, Russia does not look so sympathetically at the international exchange programs like Erasmus. In the same way, Russia has had some difficulties adapting to the Bologna process. Moreover, Russia makes it mandatory for incoming foreign students to learn the Russian language as it is the academic language in Russian universities. The Russian education system is quite different from Turkey's education system and those of many other countries. These differences are a limiting factor in the field of education cooperation. The authorities of both countries must take a constructive, corrective approach to create a "privileged partnership" in education and to improve cooperation mechanisms. More partner universities must be established and restrictions on foreign faculty must be lifted. Furthermore, the scholarship system should be organized to encourage interaction through sabbatical studies and postgraduate exchange programs. Moreover, the exchange of academicians and researchers might be another way of cooperation between the two

countries. In fact, exchange of scholars will not have technical problems as in the case of the problems of equivalence of the education system particularly in the undergraduate level.

Finally, when one looks at the fields of primary and secondary education, Turkey seems to be more open to cooperation. The International Private Russian School founded by Russians living in Antalya, together with its affiliate Tourism Vocational High School, has been providing education since 2000.¹⁰⁰ The education program is similar to the curriculum in Russia and the medium of instruction is Russian. Turkish and English are offered as foreign languages as well.¹⁰¹ The school contributes to better bilateral relations and helps Russians in Antalya overcome their problems of adaptation to life in Turkey. In contrast, even though there are thousands of Turkish people living in Russia, there are no schools where the medium of instruction is Turkish.

3. Culture

The cultural sphere is relatively free of state influence. It is mainly driven by the civilian initiative. But recently there are some signs that the states have the political will to support developing the cultural relations in a stronger manner. During Medvedev's 2010 visit to Turkey, the Turkish-Russian Civic Forum was formed under the High Level Cooperation Council. The Forum, headed by co-presidents Volkan Bozkır and Konstantin Kosachev, strives to develop humanitarian relations between the two countries based on new paradigms. Ender Arat, former Foreign Affairs Advisor to Prime Minister Erdoğan, and former ambassador, has been appointed to General Secretary position of the forum, which is expected to begin to reap benefits in following period.

In addition to the Civic Forum, progress has been also made recently towards opening cultural centers. Russian President Putin signed agreements on opening mutual cultural centers at the state level during his visit to Turkey on December 3, 2012. Taking into account the rapid developments in tourism, trade, and political relations between the two countries, this is a step that came rather late. Nevertheless, opening the cultural centers will guarantee the continuity of stronger relations in this field.

3.1 Civil Society

The role of civil society is noteworthy in the cultural sphere. There are many civil society organizations operating in Turkey like the Association for Cooperation, Friendship, and Culture between Russia and Turkey, the Association for Russian Education and Culture, the Association for Cooperation and Solidarity for Russian Language Speakers in Antalya, the Turkish-Russian Cultural Foundation in İstanbul, the Association for Russian Culture in Ankara, and the Solzhenitsyn Association for Russian Language and Culture in İzmir. A handful of organizations are also found on the other side of the divide, with the Turkish-Russian Cultural Center in Moscow, the Russian-Turkish Cultural Center in Saint Petersburg, and the Association for Promotion of Turkish Culture in Tver. Various cultural and literature activities, festivals, seminars, and conferences are being organized at these centers. Also these centers teach the Turkish and Russian languages.

Another point of development in the cultural sphere is cinema and TV series. “Muhteşem Yüzyıl” (Velikalepny Vek), “Sıla” (Vazvrashenyie Damoy), “Melekler Korusun” (Pust Angely Hranyat), “Adını Feriha Koydum” (Ya Nazvala Yiyo Feriha) and “Kuzey Güney” (Kuzey Guney) are the new Turkish TV series being shown in Russia following previous Turkish TV series like “Çalıküşü” (Karalök Ptichka Pevchaya) which were shown on Russian televisions during and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. “Muhteşem Yüzyıl” is really popular among Russian women. “Elveda Katya” (Proshay Katya) - the first Turkish-Russian movie co-produced between the two countries - stars Turkish actor Kadir İnanır and Russian actress Anna Andrusenko. “Moskova’nın Şifresi Temel” (Kod Maskvi: Temel) is the first Turkish movie shot in Russia. Works is underway to release “Sultan Bazar” which will be the first Turkish-Russian co-production TV series. The series is expected to air on Russia’s most watched television channel, Channel 1, in the coming months.¹⁰²

3. 2 International Marriages

Russian-Turkish marriages stand out as another factor, which plays an important role in societal rapprochement. Although nobody knows the exact numbers, there are thousands of marriages happening between Turkish and Russian citizens.¹⁰³ According to the statements of Tatyana Ushakova, Vice President of the Registry Office in Moscow, the number of Turkish men who are married to Russian women in Moscow is the highest of all nationalities excluding those from Russia’s neighborhood.¹⁰⁴ As a result of marriages, new Turkish and Russian diasporas are being established in both countries. It is reported that there are 18.000 Russian brides in Antalya married to Turkish men, where around 30.000 Russian citizens permanently reside.¹⁰⁵ It is also known that a significant proportion of the Russian brides have acquired Turkish citizenship. Furthermore, it is thought that the children born from these mixed marriages will take bilateral relations to the next level in the field of culture, education, art and media.

Looking at the level of interaction, the two societies get closer to each other thanks to geographical proximity, but also thanks to human factor at the social level as well. Tourism and education are spheres where efforts toward cooperation could have a sizable “soft power” impact on bilateral relations. In this regard, both countries can collaborate on developing strategies to overcome the existing problems in these areas which will, in effect, with strengthening existing relations.

APPENDIX

LIST OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION UNDER THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL COOPERATION COUNCIL (11 May 2010)

1. Cooperation Agreement between Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Russian Federation's Ministry of Interior Affairs.
2. Air Transportation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation.
3. Maritime Transportation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation.
4. The Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Combating Drug Smuggling, Psychotropic, and Interim Chemical Substances between the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Russian Federation's Federal Service for the Control of Drug Trafficking.
5. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Republic of Turkey's Council of Higher Education and the Russian Federation's Ministry of Education and Science in the Field of Higher Education.
6. Memorandum of Understanding between Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Russian Federation's Federal Veterinary and Plant Quarantine Service about the Measures on Phytosanitary to be Mutually Followed during Herbal-Based Productions Sales.
7. Memorandum of Understanding in the context of Quality and Reliability of Cereals and Cereal Products between the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Russian Federation's Federal Veterinary and Plant Quarantine Service.
8. Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, General Directorate of Protection and Control and the Russian Federation's Federal Veterinary and Plant Quarantine Service about the Shipping Conditions of Poultry Meat and Untreated Poultry Meat Products from the Republic of Turkey to the Russian Federation.
9. Protocol on Increasing the Number of Firms Entitled to Transport Poultry Meat and Poultry Meat Products from the Republic of Turkey to the Russian Federation and the right to Export Further Processed Poultry Meat Products from the Republic of Turkey to the Russian Federation.
10. Memorandum of Cooperation between the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Russian Federation's Ministry of Agriculture.

11. Agreement between the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation on Organizing International Mixed-Mode Transportation by Railway and Ferry between the Kavkaz and Samsun Harbors.
12. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and the Russian Federation's Ministry of Energy for Safe Carriage of Crude Oil in the Black Sea Region based on the priority of the Samsun-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline.
13. Protocol of Turkish-Russian Inter-governmental Joint Economic Commission 10. Session Meeting
14. Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Turkish Republic and the Government of the Russian Federation for Establishing and Operating a Nuclear Power Plant at Akkuyu field in the Republic of Turkey.
15. Agreement on the Traveling Procedures for Citizens of the Republic of Turkey and of the Russian Federation Mutually between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation.
16. Joint Statement on Establishing a High-Level Cooperation Council between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation

**THE LIST OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED UNDER THE THIRD HIGH-LEVEL
COOPERATION COUNCIL
(3 December 2012, Istanbul)**

1. Agreement on Cooperation between Çalık Holding Inc. and Rosneft Oil Company for Establishing a Joint Venture in the Areas of Marketing and Distribution.
2. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Export Credit Bank of Turkey Inc. and Russia's Sberbank.
3. Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Turkey's Prime Ministry Investment Support and Promotion Agency and Russia's Sberbank.
4. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.
5. Memorandum of Understanding on Combating Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism between the Financial Crimes Investigation Board of the Ministry of Finance (MASAK) and the Russian Federation Financial Audit Service.
6. Medium-term Cooperation Program on 2012-2015 Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Areas between the Government of Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation.
7. Turkish-Russian Civic Forum Action Plan.
8. Agreement about the Establishment and Activities of Culture Centers between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russia Federation.
9. Joint Declaration on the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant Project between the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and the Russian Federation's State Nuclear Energy Corporation.
10. Joint Declaration on Meeting of Co-Chairmen of the Turkey-Russia Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission--the Minister of Energy and Natural Resource of the Republic of Turkey, Taner Yıldız, and the Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation, Alexander Novak.
11. Agreement on Cooperation on a Military Cemetery in Both Countries between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation.

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