

INTERSTATE RELATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

KSENIA ATAMALI. TÜRKİYE AND TAJIKISTAN: EVOLUTION
OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

*Keywords: Central Asia; Türkiye;
Tajikistan; international cooperation;
bilateral relations; trade; economy;
military-industrial complex.*

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Citation: Atamali K. Türkiye and Tajikistan: Evolution of Bilateral Relations // Russia and the Moslem World, 2025, № 4 (330), P. 15–27. DOI: (330). DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2025.04.02

Abstract. The article makes an attempt to examine the development of bilateral cooperation between Türkiye and Tajikistan over more than 30 years of diplomatic relations. The two states have cultural and historical ties, which creates a solid foundation for their interaction. Türkiye and Tajikistan are actively developing trade and economic partnership, promoting international cooperation and collaborating on regional security issues. Dushanbe is working on attracting Turkish investors to the country, and Ankara focuses on importing raw materials from Tajikistan.

In the last few years, Türkiye has been actively expanding comprehensive cooperation with the states in Central Asia. First

and furthestmost, these are, of course, kindred countries and members of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS): Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, as well as Turkmenistan, which is currently holding observer status in the organization. Even though the primary focus of Türkiye is on developing cooperation with the Turkic countries, thus promoting the idea of Turkic unity, Ankara is also interested in deepening bilateral relations with another Central Asian republic – Tajikistan; although not a Turkic state, it remains a perspective partner for Türkiye in the region. Unlike other Central Asian states, Tajikistan is a Persian-speaking country; all the other republics in the region are Turkic-speaking.

As for the scope of cooperation between Türkiye and Tajikistan, it is still surpassed by the level of interaction between Türkiye and the other members of the OTS; this is largely due to the fact that Tajikistan is not a Turkic country and, therefore, is not part of the OTS. Despite being more focused on the Turkic states, Ankara also has strategic interests in Tajikistan. Moreover, we should not forget that the two countries share historical and cultural ties; for example, they are united by the spiritual heritage of great poets and philosophers, such as Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī¹.

In the international arena, Tajikistan and Türkiye show solidarity, focusing on promoting cooperation in areas, ranging from commerce to national security. The two countries traditionally share common viewpoints and goals in regional and international policy. Türkiye officially recognized the Republic of Tajikistan on December 16, 1991. Soon after, on August 4, 1992, the Turkish Embassy was opened in Dushanbe; the Tajikistan Embassy in Ankara was opened a while later, on October 16, 1995.

In over 33 years of diplomatic relations², Presidents of Türkiye have made official and friendly visits to Tajikistan four times³, while Tajik President Emomali Rahmon has visited Türkiye eight times⁴. Fairly frequent summit meetings and