

ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP OR INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION?

The Azerbaijan–Uzbekistan
Agreement and the Future of
the Organization of Turkic
States

September 2026 No: 83

Ayşe İlayda KAYA



ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP OR INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION? THE AZERBAIJAN–UZBEKISTAN AGREEMENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES

Towards the end of the 1980s, economic, political, and structural problems began to become pronounced in the Soviet Union. Among these issues that significantly impacted the system, economic stagnation, productivity problems in production, and structural challenges faced by the central administration became particularly prominent. The policies implemented by Mikhail Gorbachev, who came to power in 1985, weakened the central authority and strengthened independence demands in the Soviet Republics, rather than solving the existing problems. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan declared their independence and took their places as independent states in the international system.

Following their independence, both countries entered a process aimed first at ensuring political stability, then executing their economic transformations, and forming their posture in foreign policy. Despite their shared historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, Azerbaijan–Uzbekistan relations remained at a limited level for many years. However, from the second half of the 2010s onwards particularly with the reform process that started in Uzbekistan in 2016 and the rise of regional self-confidence after Azerbaijan's Karabakh victory cooperation between the two countries began to develop and spread into different areas.

Relations between the two countries entered the path of institutionalization through the signing of the declaration on deepening the strategic partnership in 2022¹, the establishment of the Supreme Interstate Council in 2023², and the signing of the Treaty on Allied Relations in 2024³. The Treaty on Eternal Friendship, signed during the meeting between President Ilham Aliyev and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Tashkent on August 23, 2026, represents the current stage of the process that has developed over these years.

The content of the agreement states that bilateral relations are built on eternal friendship, mutual trust, and strategic alliance. In addition to setting the goal to increase the trade volume between the two countries to 1 billion dollars by 2030, the same agreement includes preparations that form the ground for establishing sister

cities relations and developing specific plans for cooperation in similar fields.

The main question at this point is whether the agreement in question will remain limited to merely strengthening bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. It should also be evaluated whether the agreement can establish a regional model that could elevate

¹ The "Declaration on Deepening Strategic Partnership and Expanding Comprehensive Cooperation" signed in Tashkent on June 21, 2022. This document is a political text that officially elevated relations between the two countries to the level of "strategic partnership." During the same visit, approximately 18 additional agreements were signed in military, technical, transportation, and other fields.

² The Supreme Interstate Council, established in 2023. It is a high-level mechanism chaired by the heads of state that regularly coordinates strategic cooperation between the two countries.

³ The "Treaty on Allied Relations" signed in Tashkent on August 23, 2024. With this document, relations were carried from a "Strategic Partnership" to a higher level of "Alliance."

economic and strategic cooperation within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) to a higher institutional level.

Focusing on these questions, this study examines the potential that the agreement holds for the Turkic World. In this context, it addresses the institutional innovations brought by the agreement, the search for balance emerging from the perspective of Türkiye and other actors, as well as its potential limitations.

Between the Caucasus and Central Asia: The OTS Equation of the Two Countries

To evaluate the possibility of relations between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan transforming into a regional cooperation model, it is first necessary to reveal the position of bilateral relations within the Organization's general cooperation structure by examining the activities, shared interest areas, and existing cooperation mechanisms of both countries within the Organization of Turkic States (OTS).

Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan hold importance as two member countries that stand out in developing political, economic, and cultural cooperation within the Organization of Turkic States. Both countries consider their shared history, language, and cultural ties as essential elements of their foreign policy and regional cooperation. The OTS, on the other hand, aims to ensure that partnerships such as this do not remain

limited to the bilateral level, but also carry existing cooperation across various fields into a multilateral framework.⁴

In this regard, the Organization is significant not only for political and economic cooperation, but also for a wide range of fields such as transportation, customs, energy, education, culture, tourism, and security⁵. While Azerbaijan's position within the OTS makes it a key actor particularly for transportation and trade routes connecting the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Uzbekistan is likewise a crucial actor within the OTS due to its central location in Central Asia and its regional economic capacity. Therefore, cooperation between the two countries within the OTS is significant not only for bilateral relations, but also for connections between the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Economically, the OTS establishes various mechanisms within its structure to increase trade among member countries, develop investment opportunities, and reduce economic barriers. Among these are , the Turkic Investment Fund, the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Trade Facilitation Committee are among these mechanisms.⁶ In the field of transportation, the OTS identifies strengthening connectivity among member countries as one of its strategic priorities and conducts efforts toward developing the Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor.⁷

Structures such as TURKSOY, the Turkic Academy, and the Turkic Culture and

⁴ Organization of Turkic States, "Areas of Cooperation", OTS goal of moving existing bilateral cooperation to multilateral cooperation and its fields of activity.

⁵ Organization of Turkic States, "Areas of Cooperation", OTS political, economic, transport, energy, education, culture, security, and other cooperation areas.

⁶ Organization of Turkic States, "Economic Cooperation", Information on the Turkic Investment Fund, Trade Facilitation Committee, and Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

⁷ Organization of Turkic States, "Transport Cooperation", OTS transport cooperation mechanisms and work related to the Middle Corridor.

Heritage Foundation operate to institutionalize ties in the fields of culture, shared history, and language.⁸ When viewed from this perspective, the priorities of Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan within the OTS also encompass the economic and strategic positions of both countries. Furthermore, the extent to which cooperation between the two countries is consistent with OTS mechanisms and on which issues it progresses directly through bilateral relations should also be separately evaluated.

Under the OTS Umbrella or on a Bilateral Basis?

Questions also arise regarding the OTS's current cooperation structure, how relations between the two countries might develop, and how bilateral developments could be reflected in the Organization's multilateral cooperation. To understand the place of Azerbaijan–Uzbekistan relations within the OTS, it is also necessary to look at the mechanisms through which current cooperation between the two countries is conducted. The two countries act together in many areas under the OTS umbrella and develop their relations through the existing mechanisms provided by the Organization. In this context, it is necessary to distinguish between bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation carried out within the scope of the OTS in Azerbaijan–Uzbekistan relations.

One of the primary objectives of the OTS is to carry cooperation that was previously conducted at a bilateral level among member states into a multilateral framework. In line with this, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan also participate in meetings,

agreements, and institutional mechanisms within the OTS framework across various fields. Joint mechanisms developed by the OTS, particularly in the field of transport, are significant for strengthening connectivity between Central Asia and the Caucasus for both countries⁹. In addition, mechanisms in the economic sphere aim to establish a more structured framework for economic relations among member states.¹⁰

Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan does not develop only within the OTS framework. In recent years, both countries have also advanced their relations through direct bilateral agreements and high-level political mechanisms. The signing of the declaration on deepening the strategic partnership in 2022, the establishment of the Supreme Interstate Council in 2023, and the signing of the Treaty on Allied Relations in 2024 demonstrate that relations progress independently of the OTS's institutional structure as well. The Treaty on Eternal Friendship signed in 2026 can also be evaluated as a continuation of these bilateral mechanisms. Therefore, it would not be accurate to view relations between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan purely as an OTS-centric cooperation. The current structure has a dual nature, utilizing the OTS's multilateral mechanisms on one hand, while advancing through direct bilateral agreements on the other.

This situation indicates that relations between the two countries function as a complement to the OTS's existing structure. However, whether mechanisms created at the bilateral level can be transformed into a broader cooperation

⁸ Organization of Turkic States, "Cooperation on Cultural Relations", The roles of TURKSOY, Turkic Academy, and Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation in cultural cooperation.

⁹ Organization of Turkic States, "Transport Cooperation", Official website of the OTS.

¹⁰ Organization of Turkic States, "Economic Cooperation", OTS.

model within the OTS remains of particular importance for evaluating the 2026 Treaty on Eternal Friendship from a regional perspective.

Economic Basis of Friendship

There is common ground among the signed agreements and the mechanisms utilized by the two countries. Explaining cooperation only through the existing mechanisms within the OTS can lead to overlooking interest-driven relationships in other areas. The economic and geopolitical characteristics of both countries also bring the Treaty on Eternal Friendship into the axis of shared interests. Therefore, examining which fields the current cooperation concentrates on and why these fields hold importance for both countries is essential for understanding the direction of relational development.

Chief among the shared interests between the two countries are trade and investment partnerships. Economic and mutual investment relations between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan are not meant to remain merely on paper; rather, their further development is actively targeted. Stating the goal of raising the trade volume between the two countries to 1 billion dollars by 2030 in the Treaty on Eternal Friendship signed in 2026 demonstrates that economic relations constitute one of the priority areas for both nations. The designation of sister cities further reveals that cooperation is not restricted to trade alone.

Transport and logistics also represent one of the major areas where the shared interests of both countries intersect. As Uzbekistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia, the significance of alternative

transit routes for its foreign trade connections increases. Azerbaijan, meanwhile, occupies a position that provides a bridge between Central Asia and the South Caucasus across the Caspian Sea. Thus, cooperation in the field of transport rests on common ground in terms of expanding Uzbekistan's westward trade connections and strengthening Azerbaijan's status as a transit country.

In energy, meeting Uzbekistan's energy needs and enhancing its energy infrastructure, along with Azerbaijan's goal of delivering its energy resources to regional and international markets via diverse routes, heighten both countries' interest in cooperating within this domain.

Beyond the Route: The Middle Corridor and Regional Connectivity

One of the areas of shared interest between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan is transport and logistics. One of the main reasons for this is that both countries possess distinct yet complementary positions regarding trade connections between Central Asia and Europe. At this point lies the Trans-Caspian International East-West Middle Corridor. This Corridor should be considered not merely as a transport route, but also in terms of diversifying economic connections between Asia and Europe. The Middle Corridor is a comprehensive transport route starting from China, reaching the Caspian Sea through Central Asia, and extending to Europe via Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye. Railway, road, and maritime transport are utilized together along this route. Cargo originating from Central Asia reaches Azerbaijan across the Caspian Sea and is transported westward from there. In this respect, the Middle

Corridor forms an alternative route connecting Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Türkiye in trade between China and Europe.¹¹

Geopolitical and global developments have played an influential role in the increased importance of the Corridor in recent years. In particular, heightened geopolitical risks concerning the Northern Corridor passing through Russia have raised interest in alternative routes between Europe and Asia. Furthermore, the development of the Middle Corridor had previously been addressed within the scope of strengthening trade and transport connections between Central Asia and the Caucasus.¹²

From Azerbaijan's perspective, the Middle Corridor reinforces the country's transit position between the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus. The Port of Baku and its railway connections constitute a major transit hub for carrying cargo coming from Central Asia to the West. This enables Azerbaijan to improve its transport infrastructure and consolidate its regional transit standing.¹³

For Uzbekistan, the Middle Corridor is important in terms of diversifying access options to foreign markets and developing alternative trade routes. Thus, the Middle Corridor provides a vital transport opportunity that strengthens Uzbekistan's international trade connections. As a result, both countries hold mutually supportive positions at different points along the Middle Corridor.

From the Middle Corridor to Regional Cooperation: The Economic and Transport Dimension of the OTS

For the OTS, the Middle Corridor is directly linked to the Organization's cooperation goals in the field of transport. The OTS treats the enhancement of transport links among member states as a priority cooperation area and implements various mechanisms toward developing the Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor. Transport Ministers' meetings, the Transport Coordination Committee, and working groups can be evaluated within this scope. Additionally, the "Sister Ports" initiative aims to advance cooperation among the ports of member states.¹⁴

The significance of the Middle Corridor for access to Europe also emerges through this link. The route's extension to Europe via Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye increases Central Asian countries' options for accessing European markets. The European Union also approaches the development of the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor alongside areas such as transport infrastructure, border crossings, digitalization, and trade facilitation.

In this context, cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan within the scope of the Middle Corridor is not limited strictly to increasing bilateral trade. Azerbaijan aims to strengthen its transit connections and its location in the Caspian crossing, whereas Uzbekistan targets diversifying its market access options. This partnership simultaneously overlaps with the OTS's multilateral cooperation goals in economic and transport domains.

¹¹ World Bank, Middle Trade and Transport Corridor, 2023.

¹² World Bank, Middle Trade and Transport Corridor, 2023.

¹³ European Commission, Sustainable Transport Connections with Central Asia, 2023.

¹⁴ World Bank, "Türkiye: Railway Connectivity for Sustainable Growth", 2026.

Beyond cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, the development of the Middle Corridor is also vital for bolstering economic connections between Central Asia and Europe. In this connection, Azerbaijan occupies a key position between the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus, while Uzbekistan holds a pivotal place in the inner parts of Central Asia. Kazakhstan's role in transport connections between China and the Caspian Sea, alongside Türkiye's position extending to Europe via the Caucasus, completes this line. The OTS, in turn, stands out as a framework capable of bringing together these diverse geographic locations of member countries under a joint transport and economic cooperation scheme.

The work of the OTS in this domain is not confined to transport. Various mechanisms have been established in fields such as trade facilitation, investment, customs, energy, and digitalization. The Turkic Investment Fund, the Trade Facilitation Committee, and transport coordination mechanisms can be considered in this context. These structures form an essential foundation for advancing economic and strategic cooperation among member states.

Thresholds Facing Integration: Institutional Limits of the OTS

However, existing mechanisms possess certain limitations regarding regional economic integration. The fact that OTS decisions depend largely on the will and national policies of member states can lead to divergences in executing joint decisions. In the economic realm, differences in trade volumes and economic structures among countries make forming a unified economic space challenging. From a transport

perspective, border crossings, customs procedures, varying regulations, and infrastructure disparities rank among the issues hampering a more effective utilization of the Middle Corridor.

Thus, it can be stated that while the current structure of the OTS creates the necessary groundwork for cooperation, it is not sufficient on its own for regional economic and strategic integration. Specifically, facilitating customs processes, harmonizing transport standards, developing digital systems, and strengthening investment mechanisms could help reduce these shortcomings. Consequently, the OTS could transcend being merely a platform where joint decisions are taken and assume a more active role in transferring existing bilateral cooperations among member countries into a broader regional framework.

From this perspective, bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan holds the potential to serve as an example of how the OTS's present structure might be developed. However, its transformation into a regional model depends on elevating cooperation between the two nations into an adaptable framework for other OTS members and whether existing institutional mechanisms can support this process.

Eternal Friendship: A New Threshold in Relations

The enhancement of relations between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan starting in 2022 through strategic partnership, in 2023 via the Supreme Interstate Council, and in 2024 through the Treaty on Allied Relations makes it necessary to evaluate how the Treaty on Eternal Friendship creates a

distinction in the continuation of this process. While previous agreements established mechanisms aimed at advancing political and economic ties between the two countries, the Treaty on Eternal Friendship addresses these relations within a longer-term and more permanent political framework. Therefore, the agreement can be evaluated not as a new structure replacing existing cooperation, but as a stage defining the reached level of relations with a different political understanding.

The shaping of the agreement around the concept of "Eternal Friendship" is also significant from this perspective. While strategic partnership or alliance mostly demonstrates the nature of current political and security ties, the concept of Eternal Friendship highlights the political will to sustain relations between the two countries into the future. However, it should also be borne in mind that this does not directly signify institutional integration. Creating a long-term political framework via an agreement and establishing joint institutions or joint decision-making mechanisms are distinct matters. At this point, the primary distinction of the agreement lies in the possibility that cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, considering their positions within the OTS, could create a viable example for other member states. Yet for this to materialize, cooperations developed at the bilateral level must be integrated with the OTS's existing mechanisms, and other member states must be enabled to join this process.

This situation presents two distinct possibilities for the future of the OTS. If

cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan is also embraced by other member states, the process originating from bilateral relations could transform into broader regional cooperation over time. Conversely, the development of bilateral agreements at varying levels among different countries could also lead to the emergence of a multi-tiered cooperation structure within the OTS. Hence, the significance of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship stems not only from the deepening of relations between the two countries, but also from how this relationship might influence the future structure of the OTS. Nonetheless, the current structure of the OTS is not established upon a supranational integration model that transcends or stands above the sovereignty of member states.

Is an OTS Beyond Cooperation Possible?

In Seyit Ali Avcu's study evaluating the OTS through integration theories,¹⁵ it is stated that the Organization can largely be explained within an intergovernmental regionalism model developing under the leadership of states. According to the study, economic interdependence within the OTS remains at a limited level. Therefore, the current structure is not sufficient to speak of an advanced integration model similar to the European Union.

This situation makes the significance of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship even clearer. Rather than arguing that the agreement will directly lead to the institutional integration of the OTS, it would be more accurate to focus on whether it can serve

¹⁵ Seyit Ali Avcu, "Evaluation of the Organization of the Turkic States in the Light of Integration Theories," *Adam Academy Journal of Social Sciences* 15, no. 1 (2025): 323–344.

as an example for transforming bilateral cooperation into multilateral institutionalization. This is because, in the OTS's own institutional documents, the objective is expressed as expanding existing bilateral cooperation areas into multilateral cooperation across economy, transport, customs, education, and other domains. Consequently, as long as new forms of cooperation emerging in Azerbaijan–Uzbekistan relations can be aligned with the OTS's common mechanisms, they can strengthen the Organization's institutional capacity.

Here, it should also be taken into account that the concept of institutional integration does not directly imply political union. In the present structure of the OTS, sovereign equality and state decision-making authority are preserved. Thus, a more realistic prospect for integration emerges through reinforcing joint institutions, enhancing the applicability of decisions, and harmonizing bilateral cooperations across different fields under the OTS umbrella, rather than creating a shared superior authority.

Murat Jane's study discussing the future supranational¹⁶ character of the OTS is also important for this reason; the study demonstrates that the deepening of cooperation among Turkic states brings such a discussion to the fore, yet this does not imply that the current structure is directly transforming into a supranational actor.

Türkiye: Leader or Bridge?

Türkiye's position in this process is not limited merely to being one of the member states. The initiation of the OTS's founding process through the summit process led by Türkiye since 1992, the location of the Organization's headquarters in Istanbul, and Türkiye's presence among the founding members accord Türkiye an institutionally prominent standing. However, rather than directly defining Türkiye's role as a "leader state," it may be more explanatory to evaluate it as a facilitating and coordinating actor in political, economic, and transport connections between Azerbaijan and Central Asia.

Indeed, studies examining Türkiye–Azerbaijan relations and the transformation of the OTS point out that gains achieved in bilateral relations can later be carried to the OTS level. In a study published by the Turkish Academy of Sciences, it is suggested that defense, energy, transport, and identity-based cooperation along the Türkiye–Azerbaijan axis could contribute to the OTS transforming into a broader regional platform, and this process could be evaluated as "bottom-up regionalism."

However, Türkiye's role in this process must not overshadow the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. A 2026 study notes that tendencies exist where Azerbaijan views the OTS mostly through a security axis, Türkiye as a geopolitical actor, and Kazakhstan as a more pragmatic and economic platform. These divergent expectations highlight the importance of a coordination mechanism

¹⁶ Murat Jane, "Can the Organization of Turkic States Become a Supranational Actor?: An Evaluation Within the Framework of

Turkic Union Approaches," *Marmara Journal of Turkic Studies* 12, special issue (2025): 168–192.

capable of uniting the interests of different states, rather than the formation of a single leadership concept within the OTS¹⁷.

From this perspective, the contribution of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship to the institutional integration of the OTS stems not from the agreement creating a new institution on its own, but from the ability to transfer cooperation developed at the bilateral level into the OTS's multilateral structure. If the model between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan progresses in this direction, Türkiye's role may emerge not as establishing unilateral leadership, but as forming a bridge connecting Azerbaijan's position in the Caucasus with Uzbekistan's position in Central Asia within the OTS's shared institutional structure. Thus, the Treaty on Eternal Friendship gains importance for the future of the Turkic World not only in terms of rendering relations between two states permanent, but also by demonstrating whether a transition from bilateral cooperation to multilateral institutionalization is possible.

Conclusion:

The Treaty on Eternal Friendship: A Beginning or a Final Destination?

The Treaty on Eternal Friendship signed between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan on August 23, 2026, demonstrates strong political will toward maintaining political, economic, and strategic relations between the two countries within a long-term framework. Nevertheless, the current content of the treaty does not carry the nature of establishing a new joint institution, a joint decision-making body, or a binding mechanism possessing authority

above states independent of the existing structure of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). The cooperation envisioned in fields such as trade, transport, and energy can also be evaluated not as a new integration mechanism directly altering the OTS's present structure, but rather as an arrangement placing existing cooperation between the two countries into a long-term political framework.

The regional significance of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship emerges through how existing cooperation areas can be evaluated within a broader framework, rather than creating a new institution. The bilateral mechanisms developed by Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan in trade, investment, transport, energy, and political coordination significantly overlap with the OTS's multilateral efforts in economy, transport, customs, and investment. This situation allows cooperation models developed between the two countries to not remain solely within the framework of bilateral relations, but to be linked with multilateral mechanisms within the OTS.

For the Middle Corridor, this relationship becomes even more pronounced. The connection provided by Azerbaijan across the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus, combined with Uzbekistan's location in Central Asia, makes transport and trade cooperation between the two countries significant not only for bilateral economic relations, but also for regional connectivity between Central Asia and the Caucasus. Therefore, advancing cooperation between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan can be evaluated in terms of linking transport and trade networks more closely within the OTS.

¹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, "Organization of Turkic States (OTS)," accessed September 14, 2026.

In this framework, the actual potential of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship regarding the OTS lies in opening cooperation areas developed at the bilateral level to the participation of other member states and transforming them into a multilateral cooperation model within the OTS's existing institutional mechanisms. In other words, if practices developed between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan are not limited merely to deepening relations between the two countries, but can be transformed into shared mechanisms from which other member states within the OTS can also benefit, the regional impact of the Treaty can be elevated to a broader scope.

Evaluating the impact of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship on the future of the OTS through the prospect of gradual institutionalization, rather than direct institutional integration, appears more appropriate. Making cooperation formats between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan applicable to other OTS members as well, and carrying them into a multilateral structure harmonized with existing Organization mechanisms, could enable bilateral cooperation between the two countries to contribute to the economic and strategic capacity of the OTS. For this to materialize, however, depends on securing concrete progress in areas such as facilitating customs and border crossings, harmonizing transport standards, developing digital systems, strengthening investment mechanisms, and increasing the applicability of adopted decisions. Consequently, even if the Treaty on Eternal Friendship does not create a superior authority transcending the OTS's present intergovernmental structure, it presents a ground that can be utilized for transitioning from bilateral cooperation to multilateral institutionalization.

Within this framework, Türkiye's role can also be evaluated through a coordination and connectivity function linking Azerbaijan's position in the Caucasus and Uzbekistan's position in Central Asia within the OTS's shared mechanisms, rather than a unilateral concept of leadership. The role Türkiye could assume here may emerge as contributing to harmonizing this cooperation with the OTS's existing multilateral structure.

The significance of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship for the OTS is related less to creating a new institution or providing direct institutional integration, and more to the extent to which bilateral cooperation developed between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan can be transferred to multilateral cooperation within the OTS. Should this transfer take place, the treaty could contribute not only to placing Azerbaijan–Uzbekistan relations into a long-term framework, but also to enabling economic, transport, and strategic cooperation within the OTS to attain a more harmonized and institutionalized structure. From this angle, Eternal Friendship can be evaluated not as a new integration model replacing the OTS's current structure, but as a key threshold capable of showing whether bilateral cooperation can be transformed into multilateral institutionalization.

REFERENCES

- Azerbaijan, President of the Republic of. (2022, June 21). Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan signed documents. <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56481>
- Azerbaijan, President of the Republic of. (2023, August 22). Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan signed documents. <https://president.az/en/articles/view/60903>

Azerbaijan, President of the Republic of. (2024, August 23). Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan signed documents.

<https://president.az/en/articles/view/66727>

Azerbaijan, President of the Republic of. (2026, August 23). Ceremony for signing and exchanging Azerbaijan–Uzbekistan documents held in Tashkent.

<https://president.az/en/articles/view/73327>

Asian Development Bank. (2021, May). Middle Corridor—Policy development and trade potential of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route.

<https://www.adb.org/publications/middle-corridor-policy-development-trade-potential>

Asian Development Bank. (2024, December). Transit trade facilitation in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

<https://www.adb.org/publications/transit-trade-facilitation-azerbaijan-kazakhstan-uzbekistan>

Avcu, S. A. (2025). Evaluation of the Organization of the Turkic States in the light of integration theories. Adam Academy Journal of Social Sciences, 15(1), 323–344.

<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/adamakademi/article/1645742>

European Commission. (2026, February 6). EU study maps investment needs to rebuild trade routes between Europe and Central Asia via the Caucasus.

https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-study-maps-investment-needs-rebuild-trade-routes-between-europe-and-central-asia-caucasus-2026-02-06_en

International Monetary Fund. (2019, March 5). Uzbekistan: Staff concluding statement of the 2019 Article IV mission.

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/03/05/msc030519-uzbekistan-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2019-article-iv-mission>

Jane, M. (2025). Can the Organization of Turkic States be a supranational actor?: An assessment within the framework of Turkic Union approaches. Marmara University Journal of Turkology, 12.

<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/mtad/article/1604296>

Organization of Turkic States. (n.d.). Areas of cooperation: Economic cooperation.

<https://turkicstates.org/en/areas-of-cooperation-detail/2-economic-cooperation>

Organization of Turkic States. (n.d.). Organization of Turkic States.

<https://turkicstates.org/en/organization-of-turkic-states>

Organization of Turkic States. (n.d.). Turkic Investment Fund.

<https://turkicstates.org/en/partners-detail/turkic-investment-fund>

Organization of Turkic States. (2021, October 14). Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Transport of the Turkic Council held in Budapest, Hungary.

<https://turkicstates.org/en/news/meeting-of-the-ministers-in-charge-of-transport-of-the-turkic-council-held-in-budapest-hungary>

Organization of Turkic States. (2022, October 28). Meeting of the Sister Ports of the Organization of Turkic States was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

<https://turkicstates.org/en/news/meeting-of-the-sister-ports-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-was-held-in-tashkent-uzbekistan>

Organization of Turkic States. (2022, November 11). Ninth Summit of the Organization of Turkic States was held in Samarkand.

<https://turkicstates.org/en/news/ninth-summit-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-was-held-in-samarkand>

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2023, August 22). Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan establish Supreme Interstate Council.

<https://www.president.uz/en/lists/view/6602>

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2024, August 23). Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan partnership elevated to alliance.

<https://www.president.uz/en/lists/view/7485>

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2026, August 23). Presidents of Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan signed historic Treaty on Eternal Friendship.

<https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/9527>

World Bank. (2019, August 22). Uzbekistan: Toward a new, more open economy.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uzbekistan/publication/economic-update-summer-2019>

World Bank. (2023, November 27). The Middle Trade and Transport Corridor: Policies and investments to triple freight volumes and halve travel time by 2030. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/middle-trade-and-transport-corridor>



DİPLOMATİK İLİŞKİLER ve POLİTİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
CENTER for DIPLOMATIC AFFAIRS and POLITICAL STUDIES



+90 216 310 30 40



info@dipam.org



+90 216 310 30 50



www.dipam.org



Merdivenköy Mah. Nur Sok. Business İstanbul
A Blok Kat:12 No:115, Kadıköy/İstanbul

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ayşe İlayda KAYA is a third-year student in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul Aydın University. Her main areas of interest and research include Central Asia, the Turkic Republics, regional relations, and international relations. Kaya is continuing her research on Central Asia and the Turkic Republics at DİPAM.