



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC- SPEAKING COUNTRIES

COMMISSION ON LEGAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NINTH MEETING

Online, 9 June, 2022

“ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN FOREIGN POLICY COOPERATION”

REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the Plan of Activities for 2022 of the Secretariat adopted during the 10th TURKPA Plenary Session held in Turkistan, Kazakhstan, the decision to hold the Ninth Meeting of the TURKPA Legal Affairs and International Relations Commission in Kyrgyzstan was taken and recorded in the calendar. The topic of the meeting was evaluated as “The Role of Parliaments in Foreign Policy Cooperation”.
2. The Role of Parliaments in Cooperation in Foreign Policy or Parliamentary Diplomacy is an important perspective and alternative form of diplomacy that has been developed recently with the increasing role of Parliaments and their participation in foreign and international relations, although not on a large scale.
3. In general, these issues have been recognized as the exclusive jurisdiction of Ministries of Foreign Affairs and relevant Ministers as key political actors of governments or executive branch. At the same time, ambassadors or other forms of diplomacy, for example, cultural diplomacy, are considered the main tools for developing and advancing international relations between countries.

4. Parliamentary diplomacy is a means of conducting an ongoing dialogue between two or more parliaments on key international issues.
5. Today, in dealing with various global challenges, the role of Parliaments in Foreign Policy issues can be viewed from two fundamental perspectives: the first is corporate diplomacy and the second is diplomatic lobbying.
6. The role of national parliaments in the process of cooperation with other parliaments is very important. This is within the powers of parliaments, or more precisely regulated by different bilateral agreements.
7. In this context, cooperation between the parliaments of the TURKPA member countries is important and the agenda of the meeting is to contribute to the deepening of the cooperation between our parliaments.

II. PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY, MEMBER COUNTRIES and TURKPA

8. The active participation of parliamentarians in international forums and events contributes to the knowledge and understanding necessary to scrutinize a national government's foreign policy. Therefore, attending international meetings is an integral part of parliamentary work and diplomacy.
9. Parliamentary diplomacy neither replicates nor replaces traditional government diplomacy. But parliamentary diplomacy can support government diplomacy, as MPs can be more flexible when engaging in diplomatic activities. Parliamentary diplomacy provides an environment for correcting and dealing with misunderstandings that complement, enrich and encourage traditional forms of diplomacy.
10. Personal contacts between members of parliament of different states are likely to enhance mutual understanding and create useful alternative channels for bilateral relations between countries. Such contacts can be used to contextualize national developments and aim to strengthen peace, security and democracy and human rights, improve economic development, educational and social conditions.
11. Parliamentary diplomacy activities:
 - bilateral friendship groups;

- bilateral cooperation agreements between parliaments, establishment of bilateral inter-parliamentary bodies to improve relations between the countries in question in various fields;
- receiving and sending out parliamentary delegations, eg chaired by the Speaker of the House or undertaken at the level of commissions, allowing talks between a wider range of political representations than government visits;
- hosting meetings of inter-parliamentary organizations;
- sub-regional conferences with parliamentary committees from neighboring countries on a concrete and joint project for infrastructure;
- conflict resolution through the use of bilateral meetings or meetings of inter-parliamentary organizations to facilitate discussions between parliamentarians of countries involved in or otherwise affected by a conflict;
- organization of international colloquia and other confidence-building measures to promote common understanding in conflict situations;
- work by parliamentarians, such as peace-process envoys, participants in ad hoc working groups on a particular conflict, and election observers;
- meetings between parliamentarians and accredited ambassadors;
- technical cooperation (exchange of know-how) between parliaments;
- special committees to study regional conflicts within the country and members participating in government delegations seeking solutions to such conflicts;
- Issues such as that political ombudsmen are tasked with, inter alia, investigating actions taken by a political party that are likely to constitute a breach of an agreement between political parties are various examples of parliamentary diplomacy.

12. Parliamentary diplomacy is carried out by the Speakers of the Assembly at the highest level. In this sense, the meetings of the President with his counterparts, the foreign delegations he accepted, the international meetings he attended, the official visits he made to foreign

countries constitute the most important pillar of the parliaments in the field of parliamentary diplomacy.

13. As everyone knows, the heads of state are represented by the heads of parliaments in the state protocol list of most states. Accordingly, the foreign relations established by the heads of parliament are extremely important. In addition, when the head of state makes an official visit abroad, the speaker of the parliament receives delegations as the acting head of state.
14. Speakers of parliaments in every state have attached great importance to the foreign relations of their parliaments. In their meetings with their counterparts, the Speakers of the Houses are encouraged to develop relations between (the two) countries, to prevent conflicts, if any, to host multilateral meetings to act jointly on issues concerning the international community, to develop inter-parliamentary relations, and by arranging mutual visits and exchange programs between the parliaments with the signed cooperation protocols. The legislature, which is independent from the executive branch, has become an indispensable part of foreign policy with the foreign activities of the speaker of the parliament.
15. The speaker of the parliament also meets with the presidents who are on official visits to his country and their counterparts in other parliaments. In addition, the President receives prime ministers, ambassadors, and various foreign dignitaries separately.
16. The Speaker of the Parliament conveys greetings and condolences to foreign countries at international meetings and conferences he or she attends, and makes diplomatic contributions to his country by making speeches about international issues and developments.
17. Turkey and since their independence Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan actively cooperate with prestigious international cooperation organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
18. The member states of TURKPA, especially by making great strides in the establishment of Turkish cooperation organizations came together under the umbrella of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking

Countries, the biggest breakthrough of parliamentary diplomacy between the Turkic states.

19. As a manifestation of foreign policy and parliamentary diplomacy, TURKSOY, the Organization of Turkic States, TURKPA, the Turkic Academy and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation were established in 30 years.
20. The Turkistan Declaration and other important documents adopted at the 10th General Assembly of TURKPA held in Turkistan, the spiritual capital of the Turkic world, on September 28, 2021 have been a new step that strengthens cooperation in the field of parliamentary diplomacy.
21. TURKPA plays an important role as an important platform for promoting constructive dialogue between the parliamentarians of TURKPA member states by negotiating the most current issues in the region.
22. TURKPA also contributes to the development of peace and stability in its region, as well as by its potential role in coordinating the efforts of national parliaments in resolving economic, social, humanitarian and environmental problems for the benefit of the entire region, as well as strengthening dialogue in foreign policy cooperation, promoting unity and solidarity.
23. As it is known, the year 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Turkish states, in this direction, by creating various platforms for international cooperation, both among themselves and globally, it expands its sphere of influence and shows its unity to the world.
24. The regular and stable holding of TURKPA meetings shows that the high success of the Assembly and the relations within the Assembly have reached a new level.
25. Priority is given to updating the existing law and regulatory framework, through parliamentary diplomacy and integration channels, in order to promote further socio-economic development in the TURKPA region, address current challenges and take advantage of regional cooperation opportunities.

III. CONCLUSION

26. The increasingly important role of parliamentary diplomacy is one of the characteristic features of contemporary international relations. Parliamentary diplomacy, with its flexibility and dynamism, is run by elected representatives of the people and is of great importance as an arm of support and complementarity of foreign policy. Because parliaments reflect the expression of the aspirations of the peoples and public opinion, their participation in global debates greatly contributes to international efforts towards peace, security and development.
27. TURKPA strives to strengthen multilateral political cooperation mechanisms. In this context, it makes a great contribution to the rapid and effective decision-making process by consultations on specific ad hoc matters of common interest to the Members of Parliament.
28. Inter-parliamentary organizations have a great influence on coordinating parliamentary diplomacy efforts, promoting inter-parliamentary cooperation and setting the global agenda.
29. Within the framework of leading international forums, TURKPA member countries mutually support each other and display common attitudes on foreign policy issues of common interest. In this context, holding regular meetings of delegations of TURKPA member states in leading inter-parliamentary organizations will serve as a useful consultation mechanism and support common interests.
30. Member states will mutually support each other's candidacy for high posts and initiatives in leading inter-parliamentary organisations, by taking an active role in each other's activities of regional and global importance.
31. In order to deepen inter-parliamentary political cooperation, the Assembly is holding and will continue to hold Meetings of the Members Parliaments' Foreign Affairs Committee Chairs. The meetings focus on expanding cooperation, coordinating positions on international and regional issues, and other specific issues.
32. Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Groups, as a special instrument of bilateral cooperation between parliaments, play an important role in the development of parliamentary diplomacy and in promoting actions aimed at intensifying relations and common interests in the political, economic and socio-cultural fields. In this spirit, the holding of the Meetings of the

Presidents of the Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Groups of the Member Parliaments will contribute to the discussion of various issues of the multilateral cooperation agenda.