



COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

REPORT

BASIC ASPECTS AND PROSPECTS OF TURKPA's INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report stresses the necessity for further enhancement of international cooperation of TURKPA to make the ongoing process of development of our Assembly more consistent, coordinated and more responsive to the new challenges and trends. Report reflects both introductory remarks on work done in TURKPA's international cooperation since its establishment and future needs for the best use of available possibilities and resources to promote and expand international relations of TURKPA.

2. TURKPA pays particular importance to shaping its own identity on the international scene. As it was stated by the heads of member parliaments, the prime objectives of TURKPA is contribution to further progress of parliamentary diplomacy, establishment and development of relations with the parliaments and international organizations present in the region and over the world.

3. Within a short period of time, TURKPA has established relations with number of international organizations, including inter-parliamentary ones, and TURKPA Secretariat has been actively engaged in this process. TURKPA's interaction with European and international parliamentary or other institutions aims, first of all, at strengthening the role of parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary dialogue.

4. Astana Declaration adopted at the TURKPA 2nd Plenary Session reaffirms that "over short period of its activities Parliamentary Assembly has transformed into a full-fledged inter-

parliamentary structure with an observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Union of Organization of Islamic Conference”.

II. ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

5. In the framework of international cooperation, TURKPA continues its activity with international organizations aiming at enhancement of relations and closer interaction. These are the UN General Assembly, Parliamentary Assembly (PA) of OSCE, PA of NATO, European Parliament (EP), Asian Parliamentary Assembly, Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of CIS, Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Inter-Parliamentary Union, PA of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Nordic Council, Parliamentary Dimension of the Southeast European Cooperation Process, Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking states (TURKKON), TURKSOY etc. It's necessary to note that TURKPA is represented in the organizations mentioned above in capacity of observer or guest.

6. TURKPA was accepted to: the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) as an associative member; the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), being the largest international parliamentary organization with 155 member countries, and Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as an observer. As a result of the fruitful activity of the group of TURKPA parliamentarians in the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE, TURKPA was given a status of guest in this organization.

7. TURKPA closely cooperates with the European Parliament. In this regard, interaction between TURKPA and the Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD) represents a good opportunity for long-term relationships with EP and other EU institutions. OPPD operates within the Directorate-General for External Policies of EP and assists in the establishment and development of regional inter-parliamentary organizations aiming at strengthening their capacity of inter-parliamentary legislative cooperation and sharing of best practices. As the first stage of cooperation with OPPD, staff of TURKPA Secretariat has been invited by the EP to take part in experience-exchange programme on 8-13 November 2010 in Brussels. In the framework of this visit, a special schedule for TURKPA staff with the view to get acquainted more closely with EP activities was prepared. As the next stage of TURKPA cooperation with EU institutions, OPPD is planning to organize the individual fellowship programme and study visits for TURKPA secretariat and parliamentary staffs of member countries in the end of 2011-early in 2012.

8. Moreover, the staff of TURKPA Secretariat has also been engaged in the experience-exchange programme with the OSCE PA and Nordic Council. On 14-16 November 2010 the TURKPA staff made a visit to the secretariats of both organizations located in Copenhagen.

9. Participation of the TURKPA international delegations in the 35th Plenary Session of the PABSEC, Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum of OSCE PA, 123th and 124th Plenary Sessions of IPU, III Summit of CICA, VIII International Cooperation Conference of the parliaments of South-Eastern European countries, international conference on “Stability and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe” of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), conference of the Organization of Dialogue on Eurasian Platform devoted to the “Inter-cultural and Generations Dialogue”, III Astana Economic Forum, last three sessions of ASGP, plenary sessions of the OSCE PA, IPA CIS and PUIC and international conference on “OSCE and CIS: new opportunities and prospects” organized by the Parliament of Kazakhstan, is an indication of positive impact on establishing and shaping inter-parliamentary relations by TURKPA, being among the leading international institutions.

10. TURKPA activities, on top of all, meet the spirit and values of the UN. Declarations adopted by the Turkic-speaking countries leaders have repeatedly stressed their adherence to the principles envisaged by the UN Charter. Therefore, an international cooperation of TURKPA, as well, is based on recognition of legitimate and supreme role of the UN. In this regard, TURKPA has applied for granting an observer status in the UN General Assembly. As a result of the efforts done by the permanent representations of the TURKPA member states in UN, this request was positively accepted and included to the agenda of the 66th session of the UN General Assembly.

11. In the context of cooperation with international organizations, TURKPA has organized three international conferences. The conference on “Parliamentary Diplomacy – TURKPA” was held on 24 May 2010 on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and in line with fostering the Turkey-Azerbaijan and Turkey-Kazakhstan inter-parliamentary relations; an international conference on “parliamentary democracy role in the process of the interstate relations development” was held at the Baku State University on 21 September 2010. The international conference on “Increasing role of women politicians in the 21st century” devoted to the 20th anniversary of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan was organized on 3-4 October 2011 jointly by TURKPA and “Women Leaders” Association.

12. TURKPA develops cooperation with Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking states based on the common main objective to enhance the political, economic and cultural cooperation between the Turkic-speaking states. Delegation of the TURKPA Secretariat participated at 10th Summit of the Heads of Turkic-speaking states held on 15-16 September 2010 in Istanbul. During the Summit extensive information about TURKPA activities was presented by the Secretary General to the heads of states. The presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey have highly appreciated activities of TURKPA and this was enshrined in Article 18 of the Istanbul Agreement signed by the heads of states. TURKPA delegation participated in the First Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking states held on 20-21 October 2011 in Almaty.

13. TURKPA is highly interested in close interaction with other Turkic-speaking countries. Therefore, there is a process of developing contacts with the parliaments of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In near perspective, it is planned to organize a reconnaissance visit of the TURKPA Secretariat to the parliaments of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for exchange of views on future cooperation mechanism among TURKPA and parliaments of two countries.

14. TURKPA’s established mandate to observe elections in the member countries has contributed to the Assembly enhanced cooperation with public administrations and their efforts to comprehensively monitor the national elections processes in the member countries. The parliamentary elections held in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, as well as the presidential elections in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were monitored by the TURKPA International Observers Mission. The Assembly, with the view to further promote this process at the global level, added a special provision to the TURKPA Rules of Procedure at its 2nd plenary session in Astana regarding the activity of the TURKPA International Observers Mission in the non-member countries and, if required, on observation of elections jointly with other international organizations.

15. The TURKPA Secretariat contributes its utmost effort to development of cooperation with diplomatic and international organizations present in the Republic of Azerbaijan. In line with this, meetings were held with the foreign ministers of member countries, certain ambassadors of the EU countries, top officials of the UN mission and the prime UN agencies present in

Azerbaijan, officials of the European Council and European Parliament and heads of inter-parliamentary friendship groups. The Secretariat also promotes permanent consultations with diplomatic representatives to the Republic of Azerbaijan of the TURKPA founding member states.

16. Planned for the near future, are the First Forum of the World Turkic Parliamentarians, an international conference on TURKPA: New Level of Inter-parliamentary Cooperation, a Youth Forum of Turkic-Speaking countries, a conference on increasing the role of women politicians in the 21st Century, publication of the member countries Collected Constitutions translated into five official languages of TURKPA, as well as organizing the mutual exchange programs for the member countries MPs, conferences and seminars on development of relations with the parliaments of regional and neighboring countries, and implementing projects to foster the relations development among the Turkic countries.

III. FUTURE PROSPECTS

17. Parliamentary diplomacy is considered as complementing the traditional diplomacy. Participation of parliamentarians in international cooperation is crucial for strengthening peace, democracy and economic development the world over. Importance of regional and parliamentary diplomacy has been repeatedly confirmed by the leading international organizations, including UN, and this aspect is reflected in the UN Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000. Parliamentary diplomacy and its mechanisms often achieve the results that are difficult to accomplish by means of conventional channels. TURKPA is fully aware that permanent contacts between the parliament members contribute to sharing the experience and developing understanding between political elites of the member countries. Also, this contributes to building trusting and mutual understanding between the individuals.

18. TURKPA reaffirms its responsibility to keep on the agenda the issues of cooperation priorities of its member countries. At the same time, TURKPA believes that such an inter-parliamentary cooperation should go beyond the boundaries of the Turkic-speaking world. Broader cooperation of parliamentary dimension pursued by the Turkic-speaking countries in regard to the leading international organizations would create vital grounds for the world community better realizing its specific goals while bearing in mind a unique character of the region.

19. TURKPA gives particular importance to strengthening a common inter-parliamentary platform for dialogue at a global level. As a result, the Assembly was granted the observer status by the IPU and PUIC, the largest international parliamentary institutions. TURKPA is deeply interested in acquainting itself with the IPU experience in addressing the issues of utmost importance. Closed cooperation between TURKPA and PUIC, enhanced by granting each other the observer status on reciprocal basic, contribute to intensifying the inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue between the civilizations that is an issue of the agenda important for ensuring peace, harmony and understanding among different cultural communities around the world.

20. TURKPA is aware that cooperation with the international organizations, including inter-parliamentary ones, has a potential to develop into institutional frameworks. Institutionalized cooperation with the leading international institutions could facilitate defining the priority issues of common interest for promoting political dialogue and exchange of views at the parliamentary level. Elaboration of joint programs or specific projects could be another opportunity for parliamentarians of the TURKPA member countries in acquainting themselves better with the global political decision-making processes in various fields.

21. The strategically important energy and transport projects implemented by the Turkic-speaking countries would facilitate the TURKPA member countries economic development. Issues of increasing the role of the Turkic-countries' economies, above all, in development of energy resources and transport infrastructure need to be globally addressed at the level of an inter-parliamentary dialogue platform. TURKPA's interaction with international organizations and their specialized agencies in the crucial sectors of economic cooperation has a potential to foster implementation of the existing projects and agreements, and realization of the new ones.

22. Taking all the above developments into consideration, TURKPA, however, has to seek more comprehensive cooperation with international organizations. Cooperation with international organizations could be promoted in the fields of mutual interest for reinforcing coordination activities and to facilitate discussion of major regional issues.

23. Relations of TURKPA with international organizations should be strengthened through permanent participation at each others' meetings. As the cooperation of TURKPA with leading international institutions is being more institutionalized, there is a need for elaboration of concrete cooperation mechanisms or frameworks with them.

24. Effective international cooperation of TURKPA with international organizations will be complemented by the active interaction by the secretariats of TURKPA and organizations concerned. Such an interaction may be provided through exchange of information and documentation relating to specific matters or activities of common interest. In line with this, TURKPA welcomes the idea of establishing a joint data base on the priority issues of cooperation.

25. TURKPA is conscious that the will of the parliaments and parliamentarians of the member countries to provide full support to the cooperation process of Turkic-speaking states constitutes major tool towards achievement of prosperity and stability in the region, significantly contributing to the integration processes between Turkic-speaking states.

26. TURKPA is confident that the active interaction between all dimensions of the cooperation process of Turkic-speaking states will pave the way towards constructive contribution to joint efforts and undertakings for enforcing the relations with international organizations. In this respect, the Assembly considers expedient the elaboration of joint initiatives and projects with TURKKON and TURKSOY.

27. TURKPA welcomes development of cooperation with the national parliaments of other countries along with interaction with other Turkic non-member states. Apart from granting an observer status in TURKPA, this cooperation could include establishing of mechanisms for strengthening the political and economic dialogue and the equal partnership among TURKPA and national parliaments.