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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Until recently, the “strategic partnership” between Ukraine and Turkey existed primarily as an attribute of diplomatic rhetoric rather than a meaningful format of bilateral relations. Despite active political dialogue and deepening economic ties between Ukraine and Turkey, the foreign policy moves of both states lacked foresight and systematicity in many areas of cooperation.

On top of that, Ukraine’s foreign policy narrative clearly had bipolar orientation (where to go, East or West?). The South remained a blank spot on the Ukrainian diplomatic map; any references on the possibilities of bilateral cooperation with Turkey were sporadic and declarative.

Finally, the biggest obstacle to a strategic rapprochement between Ukraine and Turkey was that the latter belonged to the camp indirectly supporting Russia in order to maintain a high level of cooperation with it.

The dramatic change in the geopolitical situation in the region in 2014 led to a revision of Ukraine’s policies towards Turkey. Turkey moved to the top of Ukraine’s foreign policy priorities following the loss of Crimea, the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and the aggravation of the security situation in the Black Sea region in general. Furthermore, the deterioration of Turkey’s relations with the majority of Middle East countries and its confrontation with Russia compelled Ankara to restore connections with its neighbors and Western countries. A rapprochement with Ukraine is one of the components of Ankara’s return to its pro-European course.

As of today, Ukraine’s interests regarding Turkey are in the following areas:

- 1) Security, including security in the Black Sea region, and Turkey’s possible participation in establishing of the de-occupation mechanism for Crimea (the Geneva plus format);

- 2) Economic, in the context of attracting financial aid for the stabilization and restoration of Ukraine, as well as strengthening trade relations with Turkey;
- 3) Energy, including obtaining Turkey's permission for passage of tankers with liquefied natural gas (LNG) through the Bosphorus-, and the construction of an LNG terminal (following negotiations) and interconnectors;
- 4) Humanitarian, such as cooperation regarding internally displaced persons, in particular the Crimean Tatars; establishing ties between the Crimean Tatar minority in Ukraine and the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey in order to advocate Ukraine's interests in Turkey.

On its part, due to a crisis in its relations with Russia, Turkey included topics that had been considered too sensitive until recently, such as energy and military technical cooperation, in its dialogue with Ukraine. Political dialogue on important security and economic issues has intensified; a series of summits have been held; negotiations on the FTA have resumed, etc.

Therefore, today there are reasons to believe that, given effective Ukrainian diplomacy, Ukraine has a certain window of opportunity that could raise Ukrainian-Turkish relations to a new level. Above all, it is about developing a strategic vision of cooperation priorities instead of the reactive approach to bilateral relations, which is characteristic of Ukraine's foreign policy. However, the revision of relations with official Ankara should be based not only on the current tensions between Turkey and Russia, but also on an understanding of all the benefits of a strategic partnership with Turkey.

## **2. UKRAINE'S INTERESTS REGARDING TURKEY AND VICE VERSA: MAPPING OBJECTIVES**

### 2.1. TURKEY AS A SECURITY PLAYER IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

In the political and security dimensions, Turkey has always played an important role for Ukraine. The focus on European and Euro-Atlantic integration (excluding the period when Ukraine had non-aligned status) has always been an important part of Ukrainian-Turkish cooperation. Despite being at different stages of integration with the EU (Turkey has been a candidate for EU membership since 1987 and established the Customs Union with the EU in 1996), the process of Europeanization is a common stimulus for social transformations in both countries. Both countries have supported each other on multiple occasions, acting in tandem within international organizations, during elections to governing bodies, etc. However, it is problematic to argue that this is evidence of synchronized actions on multilateral platforms.

After the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and military aggression in eastern Ukraine, Turkey's role in ensuring Ukraine's national security has increased significantly, which is evidenced by the intensification of contacts since 2014, especially in late 2015 and early 2016. During this period, a number of important meetings took place, including the first official meeting of the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan in March 2015 and their next meeting in March 2016 within the framework of the High-Level Strategic Council between Ukraine and the Republic of Turkey in Kyiv. At these meetings, in addition to a declaration of support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Turkey's significant potential in facilitating the stabilization of the situation in Ukraine has been emphasized and the prospects of involving Turkish construction companies in the reconstruction of affected regions of Ukraine were noted. Ambassador of Turkey to Ukraine considers the fact that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission is headed by an experienced Turkish diplomat as Turkey's contribution

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to the conflict settlement.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, President Poroshenko said that Turkey supports the mechanism of de-occupation of Crimea through bilateral consultations and the Geneva plus format and supports Ukraine's economy through the provision of a loan (USD 50 million) for the financing of the general fund of the State Budget of Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

Changes in the conceptual foundations of Turkish foreign policy (specifically, expanding the Turkish "zone of responsibility," Ankara's desire to not only ensure its own security but also to project it, its self-perception as a global power, and confrontation with Russia) are contributing to a completely new format of security in the region. Ukraine should harmonize its interests and policies with it. It should be noted that in the Black Sea region, Turkey traditionally focuses on three key areas of foreign policy: Russia, the EU and the South Caucasus, while Ukraine is not among its top priorities. Moreover, at this stage, Ankara has objectively higher interest in regional developments in the Middle East (in the light of the Syrian civil war) than in the Black Sea region.

The security of the Black Sea region is, no doubt, also important for Turkish foreign policy. However, Ankara is more interested in its neighbours' and partners' stability and maintaining the status quo than, for example, in their democratic transition and accompanying instability.

That is why Turkey perceives all the political turbulence in Ukraine with caution. Furthermore, the problem of Ukraine that does not even have a land border with Turkey bothers Turkish politicians and ordinary Turks to a much lesser degree than their own "Donbas" in the South-East of the country and their own security threats, such as the Islamic State's terrorist attacks, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, and the influx of refugees from Syria.

*After the annexation of Crimea, Turkey's response in support of Ukraine came much faster than in support of Georgia during the 2009 Russo-Georgian war*

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<sup>1</sup> *Ambassador Mr. Yönet Can Tezel's Interview To Ukrinform, 23.03.2015. Available at <http://kiev.emb.mfa.gov.tr/ShowAnnouncement.aspx?ID=229651>.*

<sup>2</sup> *President of Ukraine and Prime Minister of Turkey emphasize the strategic character of partnership between the two countries. February 15, 2016. – Available at <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/prezident-ukrayini-ta-premyer-ministr-turechchini-nagoloshuy-36743>.*

Unfortunately, the current position of Turkey on Crimea is ambivalent. On the one hand, Turkey supported Ukrainian position within the UN and sent its representatives to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. Paragraph 5 of the Joint Declaration following the fifth meeting of the High-Level Strategic Council on 9 March 2016 indicates: “To take joint steps aimed at the de-occupation of Crimea, enhance cooperation within the UN, the CoE and the OSCE with the aim of restoring Ukraine’s sovereignty over the peninsula and protect the rights of Ukrainian citizens, including the Crimean Tatars, in the temporarily occupied territories.” In the case of the annexation of Crimea, Turkey’s response in support of Ukraine came much faster than in support of Georgia during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War (which did not go unnoticed in Moscow).

However, while formally supporting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, respect for international law, and overcoming separatist tendencies in Crimea through dialogue and consensus, Turkey has not demonstrated solidarity with Ukraine and the West concerning sanctions against the Russian government. Turkish officials have repeatedly stated that no external forces can use the Crimea issue to cause a deterioration of relations between Turkey and Russia. Turkey even tried to take advantage of the Russian government’s ban on food imports from countries that supported sanctions against Russia. Thus, Ankara has become a convenient example for the Russian authorities to show that there are NATO member states that do not share the “US imperialist ambitions,” thus legitimizing Russian policies.

The following analogy could be used: while Germany has experienced the “Donbasization” of its foreign policy towards Ukraine<sup>3</sup>, Turkey failed to undergo the anticipated “Crimeanization” of its foreign policy (if “Crimeanization” is understood as moving the return of Crimea and guaranteeing the rights of the Crimean Tatars on the peninsula to the top of Turkey’s agenda). In order to avoid politicizing cooperation, Turkey has focused mostly on the humanitarian component becoming one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid to Ukraine. The amount of Turkish technical aid (e.g. provision of a field hospital to the Armed

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<sup>3</sup> *Getmanchuk Alyona, Solodkyy Sergiy. Audit of the Foreign Policy. Ukraine-Germany. How to Turn Situational Partnership into Priority One. Discussion brief. IWP. Kyiv, 2016, p. 9.*



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Forces of Ukraine, or aid for the internally displaced persons (IDPs)) is increasing steadily. Following the example of Germany that "through defending the territorial integrity of Ukraine, [...] principally stood for the international law and the post-Helsinki security order in Europe, rather than Ukraine itself,"<sup>4</sup> Turkey advocates the preservation of the status quo (seeing itself as its guarantor), rather than Ukraine.

Ankara supports Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Still, change in status quo in the region, in particular through increased NATO presence, was always treated with suspicion by Turkey. This could be explained by

*While Germany has experienced the "Donbasization" of its foreign policy towards Ukraine, "Crimeanization" of Turkish foreign policy didn't happen*

traditional perception of the Black Sea as a "Turkish lake" which can be traced back to the times of the Ottoman Empire, where Russia and Turkey have their own areas of interest and a tacit agreement that interference into the neighbor's areas is undesirable. Despite the regular participation of the Turkish Naval Forces in international exercises in the Black Sea, Turkey, for instance, vetoed the expansion of NATO's Operation Active Endeavour to the Black Sea and did not allow an American war ship to pass through the Straits during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War.

### 2.2. "ECONOMIZATION" OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Geopolitical and security dynamics of 2014-2015 affected the Ukrainian-Turkish relations controversially. On the one hand, this period was marked by the resumption of negotiations on a free trade agreement between Ukraine and Turkey that were suspended in 2013. On the other hand, the conflict in the Donbas has actually led to the loss of several Turkish companies that remained in the occupied territories, while economic recession in Ukraine in general caused a decrease in trade between the two countries. Current turnover of goods between the two countries is USD 4-5 billion per year (Ukrainian and Turkish estimates differ), which is less than before the

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

recession. Economization is a traditional feature of Turkish foreign policy that defines the geo-economic interests of the country. This explains the persistence of Turkish partners regarding the issue of signing the FTA. According to the regulations of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU, the entry into force of the FTA with the EU gives Ukrainian exporters duty-free access to the Turkish market. In this regard, Turkish partners emphasize the asymmetry of trade positions of the two countries and the need for relevant access for Turkish businesses to the Ukrainian market following the signing of the FTA.

Reaching a mutually acceptable compromise on the Agreement is an important issue that requires settlement and coordination of the parties within the negotiations on the FTA. The significant difference in the positions of the parties is a contradiction regarding the goods eligible for the FTA regime. For instance, Turkey has proposed to exclude agricultural products from the FTA regime, since Turkish producers are experiencing competition from their Ukrainian counterparts. However, the agricultural sector is strategic for Ukraine in economic relations with Turkey. According to Ukraine's Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food Oleksii Pavlenko, Ukrainian agricultural business managed to achieve almost complete reorientation of foreign trade from the Russian market to markets in Asia, the EU, and Africa in 2015. Turkey became the fourth largest country in terms of general turnover of Ukrainian agricultural products (USD 993.4 million, or 5.3% of exports)<sup>5</sup>.

Turkish partners are interested in signing the FTA with Ukraine and establishing companies in Ukraine in order to take advantage of the fact that Ukraine has common borders with four EU member states and cheaper labor. In addition, for some sectors of the Turkish economy, particularly textile production, their presence on the Ukrainian market means access to the European and Russian markets. The signing of the FTA would mean not only an increase in the turnover of goods between Turkey and Ukraine but also the possibility of establishing new Turkish companies, and thus bringing investments the know-how

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<sup>5</sup> *In 2015, Ukraine increased exports of agricultural products to Asia, the European Union, and Africa, – Oleksiy Pavlenko. February 4, 2016. – Available at [http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art\\_id=248808866](http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=248808866).*

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of Turkish industry Ukrainian economy.<sup>6</sup> The signing of the visa-free regime agreement in 2011 was a breakthrough in bilateral relations and significantly intensified business activities between the two countries.

Turkish business representatives emphasize that the experience of Turkey, which has implemented a series of structural reforms and ensured rapid economic growth in the early 2000s, is important for Ukraine. In particular, the experience of Turkey is important for Ukraine in terms of the model of economic interaction within the framework of the FTA and the Customs Union with the EU without EU membership, as well as the agreement with the IMF and the implementation of structural reforms. For instance, the Vice Chairman of the International Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association compares the situation in Ukraine with the situation in Georgia which, having two frozen conflicts on its territory, has succeeded in implementing economic reforms and in which Turkish business is the biggest investor.<sup>7</sup>

Turkish business remains interested in investing in the Ukrainian economy. According to the Ukrainian State Statistics Service, the volume of Turkish investments in Ukraine reached USD 198.7 million as of December 31, 2014, which means that Turkey is the 21st biggest investor in the Ukrainian economy. However, according to Turkish sources, part of Turkish investments is coming to Ukraine through third countries, and thus the actual volume is much bigger.<sup>8</sup>

In 2015, Turkcell and its subsidiary company Life alone invested some USD 500 million in the Ukrainian economy. Turkish Airlines, Pegasus, and Atlasjet continue investing in the Ukrainian economy. Turkish Airlines is the only company providing air transportation to Zaporizhia. Moreover, Turkish Airlines became the first company to provide international flights to Kherson in 2014 with passenger

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Interview with Burak Pehlivan, the Vice Chairman of the International Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association (March 2016)*

<sup>8</sup> *Ukrayna'nın genel ekonomik durumu ve Türkiye ile ekonomik-ticari ilişkileri. T.C. Kiev Büyükelçiliği Ticaret Müşavirliği. Mayıs 2015. – S.58. <https://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/>*

traffic of about 50,000 per year, which boosted the economic situation in the region.<sup>9</sup> The auction for 3G mobile communication licenses, which resulted in UAH 11 billion of Turkish investments, has been referred to as an “extraordinary occasion” of transparent privatization by President Petro Poroshenko.<sup>10</sup> Turkish companies are also waiting for opportunities provided by the future privatization of ports.

In the transport sector, the important areas are the development of ferry lines, intermodal passenger transportation, the modernization of sea ports, and the development of logistics infrastructure. Another topic of consideration is Turkey’s possible involvement in the Viking project, a combined transport train that passes through Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania and connects the transportation lines of the Baltic region with the Black, Mediterranean and Caspian seas. Finally, the possibility of establishing a transport corridor through Ukraine, Turkey, Egypt and from the Baltic states (Lithuania) to the Red Sea (Jordan) is being discussed.

In the light of Russian sanctions against Turkey and limited opportunities for Russian citizens to visit Turkey for tourism, Turkey places high expectations on Ukrainian tourists.

Unfortunately, the traditional element of bilateral dialogue has always been not qualitative, but quantitative objectives, such as declarations about the need to achieve a certain level of trade volume between the two countries (USD 10 billion by 2010, or 20 billion by 2020). Even quantitative indicators were unrealistic, not to mention the qualitative ones. For instance, Ukrainian exports to Turkey consist of raw materials only, with the proportion of high-tech products of less than 1%. With the existing structure of exports and imports (Ukrainian exports are dominated by metal, food, chemical products, and wood products, while Turkish exports are mainly food and light industry and chemical products), it is impossible to achieve the announced USD 20 billion turnover by 2020, says the chairman

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *President’s Annual Address to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On the Internal and External Situation of Ukraine in 2015.” June 4, 2015. – Available at <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/shorichne-poslannya-prezidenta-ukrayini-do-verhovnoyi-radi-u-35412>.*

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of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) of Ukraine. Other areas and vectors of cooperation should be involved, while taking advantage of the existing and new transport corridors: the Viking container train, the Via Carpatia transport route (from the Baltic Sea to the Aegean Sea with branches for Turkey, Ukraine, and Belarus), and the new Silk Road.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.3. UKRAINE AND TURKEY: COMPETING ENERGY HUBS?

One of the key areas of bilateral cooperation is cooperation in the energy sector. The interests of the two countries in the field of energy are similar: the need to diversify sources of energy supply, security of energy supply, active use of transit potential, exploration and production of own resources, etc. Ukraine and Turkey have Central and Southern Gas Corridors which are important for the transportation of energy resources to Europe. During the recent meetings, the parties agreed to cooperate in the construction of underground gas storage facilities, nuclear power, alternative energy, energy saving technologies, etc.

Ukraine has repeatedly expressed willingness to participate in the construction of oil and gas pipelines in Turkey, as well as in joint production of hydrocarbons in the Black Sea. For instance, Ukraine had prospects of participation in the Nabucco and Samsun-Ceyhan projects and declared willingness to participate in the construction and operation of the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP) initiated in May 2012. However, Ukraine's potential participation in such projects is limited and is not implemented to the full.

Ukraine's energy security depends on Turkey in many ways. The strategic objective is to obtain Turkey's permission for the passage of tankers with liquefied natural gas (LNG) through the Straits to the Black Sea. Furthermore, the implementation of the Russia-announced Turkish Stream that would move the transit of Russian gas to Europe

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<sup>11</sup> *In order to reach USD 20 billion of goods turnover, Kyiv and Ankara should move from friendly relations to a strategic partnership. March 14, 2016. – Available at <http://interfax.com.ua/news/economic/330639.html>.*

from Ukraine to Turkey will determine the future of Ukraine's gas transportation system. The fact that this project may be canceled by Ankara in the context of current Russian-Turkish confrontation cannot hide another disappointing fact: Ukraine is unable to coordinate its energy policy with Turkey which is guided only by its own interests of becoming a global energy hub.

The report of the Cabinet of Ministers for 2015 allows an assessment of progress in the implementation of Ukraine's main priorities regarding Turkey.<sup>12</sup> The key issue in the Energy Independence Program is the construction of an LNG terminal, which requires reaching an agreement with Turkey on allowing the passage of LNG tankers through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

According to the Montreux Convention of 1936, all vessels other than military can freely navigate through the Straits. In 1994, however, Turkey adopted (and then amended in 1998) the Maritime Traffic Regulations for the Straits, actually introducing additional security measures and restrictions on the size of tankers. Given that the maritime law considers LNG a dangerous good, the passage of LNG tankers requires permission from Turkey. In fact, there is no precedent of an LNG tanker passing through the Straits. Turkey's refusal is formally explained by environmental considerations. According to the Ambassador of Ukraine to Turkey, the problem is caused by Ankara's unwillingness to create a precedent, as well as by the need to define the technical parameters: the number of tankers and frequency of passages. The operation of the LNG terminal would require eight tankers per month, which should not be a significant additional load for the Straits.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Information on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Strategy for Sustainable Development "Ukraine-2020" in 2015 (approved by Order No. 213 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of March 4, 2015 with amendments).* – Available at <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/>

<sup>13</sup> *Interview by "Dzerkalo Tyzhnya": "Dangerous Cargo?" February 19, 2013.* Available at: *official web site of the Embassy of Ukraine to the Republic of Turkey:* <http://turkey.mfa.gov.ua/ua/embassy/ambassador/interviews/1204-interview-to-dzerkalo-tujnya-in-russian>.

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The results of current negotiations between Kyiv and Ankara on the admission of LNG tankers through the Straits are not widely publicized. It is only noted that “the Cabinet of Ministers, the Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Energy and Coal, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are working consistently with the Turkish side on this issue in order to achieve a positive solution.” This topic is regularly discussed, in particular, during meetings between President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan and was on the agenda during the visit of Prime Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu to Ukraine. Furthermore, bilateral technical consultations have been held with experts from the Turkish side within the framework of negotiations on the FTA between Ukraine and Turkey, and the next steps in the negotiation process have been outlined.

### 2.4. CRIMEAN TATARS: A POTENTIAL “FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE” BETWEEN UKRAINE AND TURKEY

The role of cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey in the humanitarian dimension is becoming increasingly important. Turkey has always been a major donor of aid for Turkic ethnic groups living in Ukraine. Turkey identifies

*The Crimean Tatars have become the engine of humanitarian cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey*

itself as a guardian of all Turkic peoples and actively uses them as levers of influence in the partner countries. That is the cause of Turkey's interest in the Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, and the Gagauz people living in Ukraine. The Crimean Tatars are referred to as the “friendship bridge” between the countries at all official meetings.

Due to recent developments in the country, the Crimean Tatars have become the engine of humanitarian cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey. The report of the Cabinet of Ministers lists the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin to Turkey to attend the second session of the World Congress of Crimean Tatars on August 1, 2015, among the most important visits and meetings. In order to attract donor aid for the displaced persons, Ukrainian citizens

in the Donbas and Crimea, including the Crimean Tatars, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the Coordination Office of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency in Ukraine signed a protocol of intent in January 2015. For instance, there are plans to build homes for the Crimean Tatars, IDPs from Crimea, in the Kherson region with the support of Turkey.

Turkey has repeatedly expressed concerns regarding the status of the Crimean Tatars. The leader of the Crimean Tatar people Mustafa Dzhemilev (Qirimoglu) had several meetings with Turkish leaders and was awarded the Order of Merit of the Republic of Turkey in recognition of his efforts aimed at rapprochement between the nations and development of friendly relations between Turkey and Crimea. The occupation authorities' Crimea entry ban for Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov and threats to dissolve the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people were condemned by Turkey. An informal delegation of Turkish scholars and experts visited Crimea to clarify the situation with human rights on the occupied peninsula.

Aside from the Crimean Tatar issue, interpersonal contacts and interaction between civil societies in both countries are sporadic, and there are few examples of cooperation between Ukrainian and Turkish NGOs. Certainly, there are examples of joint projects in science and technology and culture and cooperation at the level of regions and cities, etc.; sports and cultural exchange contacts are also developing. However, such cooperation is not systematic. The dynamics of tourism cooperation is quite impressive but not proportional: Ukrainian tourists visit Turkey more often than Turks Ukraine.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Bilateral relations in tourism. [Digital source]. Available at: the official web site of the Embassy of Ukraine to the Republic of Turkey <http://www.mfa.gov.ua/turkey/ua/5049.htm>. - Last accessed on April 7, 2010.*



### **3. STAKEHOLDERS, INTEREST GROUPS, AND INFLUENCE GROUPS**

The power structure in Turkey provides some insights regarding the intricacies of decision-making processes in Turkey's foreign policy. The governing party in Turkey since 2002 is a moderate Islamist party – Justice and Development Party (AKP in Turkish abbreviation). This party orchestrated the major changes in the Turkish domestic and foreign policy. For years it's been able to form a one-party government and establish itself in all power structures. After the parliamentary elections in summer 2015, when AKP was not able to form a coalition government, early elections were called in order to let AKP gain the majority.

Thus, representatives of the the same political force, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister (ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs) Ahmet Davutoğlu and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu obtained key positions in the country. For this reason as well as because of the centralized process of decision-making in Turkey, no real pluralism of opinion exists in Turkish foreign policy, while the pivotal decisions are made “manually.”

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu is the key person in AKP foreign policy development. In 2009 – 2014 he served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Before that he used to be Erdoğan's foreign policy advisor. He is the ideologist of Turkey's transformation into a “global state”.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is also active in foreign policy making, including the Ukrainian direction. This is illustrated by the meetings of the Ukraine-Turkey High Level Strategic Council in 2015-2016.

Other political parties in the Turkish parliament don't have any serious influence in the Turkish foreign policy. Despite the fact that they criticize the government about its passive policy towards Ukraine (for example, the Party for Nationalist Movement calls on Turkey's more active position regarding the Crimean tatars), their views mainly coincide with those of the government. The policy of

the Republic People's Party (now in opposition) towards Ukraine in 1990s through 2002 was not really different to that of AKP.

***Ukraine needs to develop pragmatic relations with Turkey, while standing up for the democratic values.***

For these reasons, Ukraine's position towards domestic political process in Turkey remains a sensitive issue. Ukraine's appeals to its European partners in terms of the European choice of Ukraine and common European space can potentially become confrontational issues in relations with Turkey. These are the rollback of democratic transformations in Turkey, massive violations of the human rights, arrests of journalists and academics, oppression of the Kurdish minority. The European community is unanimous in its condemnation of the current government's actions. However, it needs to balance between the criticism of the government and its dependence on Turkey on the issue of the conflict settlement in Syria and refugees' problem. Now Ukraine is confronted by a similar challenge to develop pragmatic relations with Turkey, while standing up for the democratic values. At the same time, strengthening of the current government's position in Turkey means stable and predictable foreign policy in general and towards Ukraine in particular.

In the humanitarian sphere, the governmental agency TIKKA (Turkish Agency for Development and Cooperation) is an important channel of humanitarian aid. Numerous projects have been realized in recent years, starting from residence construction for the Crimean Tatars to the reconstruction of cultural monuments in Ukraine. The intensification of contacts between Ukrainian ministries and TIKKA that included new bilateral agreements is definitely a positive sign. However, TIKKA's economic and humanitarian activities, including those in Crimea before the occupation, were artificially politicized by the Ukrainian side. Paradoxically, for many years there has been a stereotype shared by certain individuals in the Ukrainian political and academic community that Turkey, not Russia, would sooner or later annex the Crimea.

Business also plays a significant role in the bilateral Ukrainian-Turkish relations. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, an economic component has been kept on the front burner and we

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can acknowledge the complete “economization” of cooperation between the two countries. Such institutions as chambers of commerce and industry can help bridge the gap between enterprises in two countries. For instance, the Ukrainian CCI has an office in the city of Trabzon and the region of Trabzon, which is headed by the Chairman of Trabzon Association of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. Business delegations formed by the CCI in cooperation with the International Turkish-Ukrainian Businessmen Association (TUID) is another achievement. Many Turkish businessmen are encouraged to work more closely with Ukraine after the loss of a large Russian market, while such business delegations are attractive to those Ukrainian businessmen who lost their business in eastern Ukraine.<sup>15</sup>

The issue of the Crimean Tatars is an important uniting factor in Ukraine-Turkey relations. The Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars headed by Mustafa Dzhemilev has been most active in this area. Over the past two years, Dzhemilev met with both Erdogan and Davutoglu on numerous occasions.

As mentioned above, the main conduit of Ukrainian interests in Turkey is the Crimean Tatar diaspora (approx. one million people).<sup>16</sup> This ethnic group, whose members call themselves Crimean Turks, is well-represented in Turkish political parties, government institutions, and business circles and is very active.<sup>17</sup> This activity is a result of the so-called “diaspora nationalism” of the Crimean Tatars who are well-integrated into Turkish culture, but have a

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<sup>15</sup> *Ukrainian enterprises are ready to replace their Russian counterparts on the Turkish market. Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, February 25, 2016. – Available at [http://www.ucci.org.ua/visti/rus/news/2016/02/25/51\\_.shtml](http://www.ucci.org.ua/visti/rus/news/2016/02/25/51_.shtml)*

<sup>16</sup> *According to other estimates, approx. 100,000 representatives of the Crimean Tatar diaspora currently live in Turkey and several million Turkish citizens have Tatar origin.*

<sup>17</sup> *For instance, some celebrities, such as the Vice Chairman of the parliamentary Nationalist Movement Party (NMP) or Murat Ulker, the wealthiest person in Turkey, according to Forbes, have Crimean Tatar origins.*

strong feeling of kinship, develop their national identity, and show interest in events in their ancient homeland, Crimea.<sup>18</sup>

For instance, some Crimean Tatar activists felt abandoned by the Turkish authorities which, in their opinion, sacrificed the interests of Crimean Tatars in order to maintain good relations with Russia, while they expected more efforts from Ankara. The intention to broaden economic cooperation with Russia, announced by the authorities, despite the anti-Russian sanctions imposed by the Western states has resulted in public outrage.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, Turkey also has an active pro-Russian Crimean Tatar Association that cooperates with Russia and is often referred to by the Russian media. In particular, its chairman publicly criticizes the Ukrainian authorities and the blockade of Crimea, equating it to the Islamic State's terrorist activities in Syria.<sup>20</sup> In addition, puppet Crimean Tatar organizations that serve as voices of Russian propaganda were established in Crimea. In particular, they organized the so-called National Assembly of the Crimean Tatars in Crimea simultaneously with the Congress of the Crimean Tatars in Ankara in order to express their protest against the “destructive activities of a group of [Crimean Tatar] politicians that found shelter in Kyiv and support confrontation.”<sup>21</sup>

This should be taken into account, particularly in the framework of public diplomacy aimed at Turkish society, in order to prevent such pro-Kremlin groups from monopolizing Crimean Tatar discourse.

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Goble. *Turkey's Crimean Tatars Reach Out to Their National Homeland*. *Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume (10), No. 120*. June 25, 2013. Available at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=41070&no\\_cache=1#.VtWeT8vrjcs](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=41070&no_cache=1#.VtWeT8vrjcs).

<sup>19</sup> Nicholas Clayton. *Crimean Tatars Feel Abandoned by Turkey*. November 26, 2014. Available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/71111>.

<sup>20</sup> *Crimean Tatars in Turkey equate Ukraine's blockade of Crimea to IS actions*. October 29, 2015. Available at <http://tass.ru/en/world/832745>.

<sup>21</sup> *While on a working trip to Crimea, President of Russia Vladimir Putin had an informal meeting with representatives of Crimean ethnic groups' public associations*. August 17, 2015. Available at [http://www.turkey.mid.ru/hron/press\\_e\\_98.html](http://www.turkey.mid.ru/hron/press_e_98.html)

### 3. STAKEHOLDERS, INTEREST GROUPS, AND INFLUENCE GROUPS

The new Ukrainian policy towards the Crimean Tatars will certainly enjoy positive perception in Turkey. Turkey welcomed the fact that Kyiv started paying more attention to the Crimean Tatars in comparison to the previous administrations. Still, more concrete steps are expected regarding the implementation of the legislation related to Crimean Tatars<sup>22</sup>.

The academic community is an important actor, which does not necessarily influence the decision-making process, but plays an important role in shaping the opinions. Turkish academic community closely follows the events in Ukraine, thus joint events in the sphere of science and education could become one of the elements of Ukraine's public diplomacy.

*Turkey welcomed the fact that Kyiv started paying more attention to the Crimean Tatars in comparison to the previous administrations*

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<sup>22</sup> *Ambassador Mr. Yönet Can Tezel's Interview To Ukrinform , 23.03.2015. Available at <http://kiev.emb.mfa.gov.tr/ShowAnnouncement.aspx?ID=229651>.*

## 4. EXISTING AND POTENTIAL RISKS AND CONFLICTS

### ANKARA’S “RUSSIA ABOVE ALL” POLICY

It can be predicted that Turkey will continue to balance between Russia and the West. In one real scenario, Turkey will maintain a cautious policy towards countries which it views as Russian satellites in order to minimize the risk of further deteriorating relations with Moscow. The current leadership may consider deepening cooperation with Ukraine a “red line” that should not be crossed in order not to irritate the northern neighbor.

**Probability.** High. Turkish view of the current relations with Russia is shaped by the historical experience<sup>23</sup>. It indicates that in the past, Turkey has already been on the brink of a full-scale conflict with Russia. However, that did not stop their relations from turning into “managed competition” later.

**How to avoid?** At this stage, Ukraine has a unique window of opportunity for deepening relations with Turkey. Taking into account the aggravation of Russia-Turkey conflict, situational revival of Turkey’s interest in cooperation with Ukraine is possible. But this would not necessarily be the merit of Ukrainian diplomacy. As a result of the annexation of Crimea, Russia has effectively violated the areas of interest in the region; now the Kremlin is expanding its military presence in the Black Sea, actively militarizing the peninsula and modernizing its fleet, which affects Turkey’s defense strategy and forces Ankara to secure the support of all possible parties. Therefore, it is about efficiently taking advantage of the opportunity to advance cooperation in those areas where little progress has been observed so far due to their sensitivity (in particular, military technical cooperation and the energy sector).

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<sup>23</sup> *Some scholars in Turkey opine that the current Turkish strategy towards Russia is shaped by the fact that Turkey (the then Ottoman empire) lost the majority of wars against the Russian empire.*

Ukraine should make use of the situation in which Turkey has to show solidarity with Ukraine and resolve security threats by joint efforts. This could intensify cooperation with Turkey through NATO, in particular, with regard to the Ukrainian Armed Forces' interoperability with the armies of NATO members, and reforms of the security sector. Certain agreements on deepening of the military technical cooperation have been already reached during negotiations.

#### LACK OF TRANSPARENCY ON THE UKRAINIAN MARKET NEGATES UKRAINE'S VALUE AS A BUSINESS PARTNER FOR TURKEY

To summarize, several objective problems exist in the trade and economic sphere. First, there is the disproportionate balance of trade in favor of Ukraine that worries the Turkish side and should be adjusted for the successful functioning of the FTA between Ukraine and Turkey. Second, the structure of Ukrainian exports to Turkey indicates that high-tech products have a negligible share. Ukrainian exports are dominated by products with low added value, mainly raw materials; the volume of trade in services is insignificant. In addition, while Turkish companies occupy an important niche in the Ukrainian economy (Enka, Doğuş, Çukurova, Türkcell, etc.), only a handful of Ukrainian companies are present on the Turkish market.

For Turkish business, there are two important issues on the bilateral agenda, and both are specific for Ukrainian-Turkish economic cooperation. The first is the issue of signing the FTA. The second is a lack of opportunities for Turkish airlines to provide more flights to Ukraine due to monopolization in the aviation sector. Turkish businesspersons complain about the problems faced by all businesses in Ukraine, such as the rule of law, bureaucracy, monopolization, etc.<sup>24</sup> According to the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey to Ukraine, the most common problems that undermine the activities of Turkish companies on the Ukrainian market are inconsistencies

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<sup>24</sup> *Interview with Burak Pehlivan, the Vice Chairman of the International Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association (March 2016)*

in standardization, delayed payments for services provided by Turkish contracting companies, flawed customs and tariff policies, contradictions in Ukrainian legislation, shadow economy and non-transparent business practices.<sup>25</sup>

**Probability.** High, given the slow pace of reforms and the dominance of oligarchic structures' interests in the area of doing business in Ukraine.

**How to avoid?** Aside from the implementation of reforms aimed at improving the business climate in Ukraine in general, Turkey can also become a platform for the implementation of the new mechanism of trade missions in the economic sphere. The establishment of a trade mission in Turkey should become an effective tool for promoting the Ukrainian economy abroad. In fact, Ukraine and Turkey have previously introduced an innovative format of bilateral relations, the High-Level Strategic Council, which remains an effective diplomatic tool for implementing a real strategic partnership between the two countries.

The signing of the FTA is possible given the political will, as it was with the introduction of a visa-free regime with Turkey. According to Turkish business representatives, "hundreds of Turkish companies and factories are waiting for the FTA to be signed. After that, we will see a lot of big investments, and, most importantly, greenfield investments, since most Turkish companies in Ukraine are currently working in the service sector." It is also important to present the opportunities of the Ukrainian economy not as those of a failed state due to the war in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine should demonstrate that 93% of its territory is peaceful and there are ample investment opportunities.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ukrayna'nin genel ekonomik durumu ve Türkiye ile ekonomik-ticari ilişkileri. T.C. Kiev Büyükelçiliği Ticaret Müşavirliği. Mayıs 2015. S.77-79. Report of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey to Ukraine. – Available at <https://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/>.*

<sup>26</sup> *Interview with Burak Pehlivan, the Vice Chairman of the International Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association (March 2016).*



### LOW AWARENESS OF UKRAINE IN TURKEY; DISTORTED PERCEPTION OF UKRAINIAN REALITIES BY THE TURKISH POLITICAL CIRCLES AND THE PUBLIC; INFLUENCE OF RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

Turkey demonstrates both a lack of awareness of Ukraine and a lack of interest in its politics or culture. The pages of Turkish newspapers are dominated by such definition of Ukrainian events as “civil war.” Russia’s role in the conflict in the Donbas is little known; many ordinary Turks consider Ukraine a part of Russia. This problem could be partially explained by a lack of experts on Ukrainian issues in Turkey, and the fact that some journalists specializing in the post-Soviet space are Russian-speaking immigrants with Turkic roots who use Russian sources for their reports. As in other countries, Turkish academic and expert community also consists of those who sympathize with Ukraine as a victim of Russian aggression and thus harshly criticize the conciliatory stance of the Turkish leaders, and those who profess the equidistance principle in order to avoid the conflict’s adverse effects. There are even calls for using the conflict between Russia and the West for Turkey’s own benefit. Incidentally, the latter position has repeatedly appeared in the statements of Turkish officials. The role of the Russian embassy to Turkey serving as the voice of propaganda is also noticeable. The new pattern in Russian-Turkish relations has led to Ukrainian-Turkish consultations on joint efforts in the information war against Russia.

**Probability.** Medium to high, depending on whether relations between Russia and Turkey deteriorate or improve.

**How to avoid?** Given incomplete and often distorted information about Ukraine in the Turkish media, it is important to communicate information about Ukraine to the Turkish audiences. Inviting journalists from leading media outlets to visit Ukraine and highlight local events could be beneficial.<sup>27</sup> It is also important to

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<sup>27</sup> *An example could be an article on Kherson published in the Turkish newspaper Hürriyet following the Turkish Airlines' opening of the new Istanbul-Kherson flight (Saygılı S. Dinyeper'in milletler bahçesi: Kherson. 11 Eylül 2015. Available at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dinyeper-in-milletler-bahcesi-kherson-30045564>.)*

use Ukraine's diplomatic institutions. Despite the modest resources available to Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad, the Embassy of Ukraine in Ankara actively informs the public about events in Ukraine. The Ambassador of Ukraine to Turkey Serhii Korsunsky was named among the top ten Ukrainian diplomats abroad in an IWP study.<sup>28</sup> The Ukrainian embassy is quite active in the media and has active profiles on social networks that regularly cover Ukrainian events in Turkish, English and Ukrainian. Active cooperation should also be established with the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey.

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<sup>28</sup> *The "Top-10 Ambassadors in Ukraine and Abroad" rating, February 21, 2012. – Available at <http://iwp.org.ua/eng/public/504.html> and the "Top-10 Ukrainian and Foreign Ambassadors" rating, February 20, 2013. – Available at <http://iwp.org.ua/eng/public/687.html>.*

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A strategic partnership requires systematic coordination of both states' activities in all sectors. The current cooling in Russian-Turkish relations creates a window of opportunity for Ukraine. However, Kyiv should not perceive this situation as a magic wand that would make Turkish partners more compliant and willing to make concessions, for example, in gas transit or in the negotiations on the development of the FTA.

**In order to achieve the most desirable scenario for the development of bilateral relations in the political sphere, Ukraine should implement the following action plan:**

1. Facilitate the completion of the conceptual, institutional and regulatory provision for the declared strategic partnership which would include, inter alia, steps to cut the excessive delays in internal procedures needed for bilateral Ukrainian-Turkish agreements to enter into force; expansion of the number of consulates in both states.
2. Taking into account the strategic position of Turkey towards Russia, the EU, and Ukraine and Ankara's sensitive attitude to the Crimean Tatars, it is important to ensure Turkey's more active role in resolving the problems in Crimea, including the Geneva Plus format proposed by Ukraine.
3. Discuss Turkey's possible support of the sanctions against Russia, condemnation of the actions of the Russian authorities, diplomatic pressure on Russia, and recognition of Turkey's interests in the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Consider Turkey's potential accession to ODED-GUAM, etc.; Ukraine's joining the trilateral security dialogue between Poland, Romania and Turkey, etc.
4. Discuss with Turkey the need to enforce the occupied territory regime over Crimea, especially regarding restrictions on Turkish vessels' entry in Crimean ports and Turkish airlines' flights to the peninsula. Inform the competent Turkish authorities about violations of the occupied territory status by Turkish vessels.

Monitor processings in criminal cases opened against the carriers violating this status by the competent Turkish authorities.

5. Establish an expert framework, involving representatives of the Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and other ministries, as well as the existing joint Ukrainian-Turkish institutions, and representatives of the expert community, to monitor the situation in bilateral relations and coordinate the activities of the existing institutions.
6. Support the de-politicization of the issue of Ankara's official aid to the Turkic ethnic groups in Ukraine (Turks, Meskhetian Turks, the Gagauz people, and the Crimean Tatars). Facilitate the granting of diplomatic status to the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) in Ukraine.
7. Intensify the realization of the idea to establishing an Interregional Cooperation Program as a tool to strengthen direct ties between Ukrainian and Turkish regions.
8. Consider the possibility of Turkey's involvement in the development of a joint security strategy for the Black Sea region and the coordination of joint efforts to maintain stability (such as the Turkish Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform initiative, proposed after the 2008 Russo-Georgian War).
9. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine should initiate consultations with NATO member states to include the issue of strengthening the Alliance's military presence in the Black Sea region in the agenda of the NATO-Ukraine Commission's meeting during the NATO Summit in Warsaw.
10. Intensify cooperation with Turkey in the field of joint exercises, exchange of experience between experts of both countries, and joint consultations, training and workshops on security sector reforms and army modernization. Study the experience of Turkey in its fight against some terrorist (Kurdish) organizations and

post-conflict regulation (e.g., the settlement of former military personnel in the Kurdish areas).

11. Intensify negotiations on establishing joint ventures to deepen military industrial cooperation, etc.

**In order to achieve full economic cooperation, Ukraine should do the following:**

1. Eliminate technical issues that most frequently inhibit the development of bilateral relations (e.g., simplify customs procedures).
2. Sign the FTA on mutually acceptable terms.
3. Establish a trade mission of Ukraine to Turkey in order to promote Ukrainian business interests in Turkey.
4. Provide state support and involve businesses in the implementation of joint Ukrainian-Turkish projects, such as the opening of new ferry lines, the production of high-tech products, etc.
5. Ensure the participation of Turkish companies and investment funds in the implementation of investment projects, competitive tenders for sale of stock of Ukrainian companies in order to enhance investment cooperation. Study Turkish experience of establishing trade missions abroad.
6. Ensure Turkey's participation in the Ukrainian-Belarusian-Lithuanian Viking container train project. In the context of the government's objective to expand port capacity and infrastructure in order to increase exports, Turkey appears to be a natural partner with which to improve logistic capacities on both sides of the Black Sea.
7. Propose a plan of joint exhibitions and fairs for Ukrainian and Turkish companies in such areas as agriculture, industry, tourism, etc.

8. Establish systematic contacts with existing business associations representing Turkish business circles in Ukraine; maintain contacts between the Chambers of Commerce of both countries and Turkish business associations in both Ukraine and Turkey. An important presentation tool is the organization of business delegations to Turkey in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ukraine, which laid the foundation for the presentation of Ukraine in different regions of Turkey.

**Within the framework of cooperation with Turkey in energy sector, Ukraine should do the following:**

1. Taking into account the need to diversify energy sources and actual loss of access to energy resources on the continental shelf, discuss the options for resolving the political and technical challenges of passage of LNG tankers through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to supply a Ukrainian LNG terminal in the framework of negotiations with Turkey.
2. Encourage joint activities for the implementation of projects to modernize the gas transportation system and other energy infrastructure objects in both countries.
3. Lobby for projects in which Ukrainian companies would provide subcontract services to the Turkish coal industry, for the construction and operation of nuclear power plants in Turkey, etc.
4. Study the possible positive and negative effects of the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP) project on Ukraine's energy security.

**Within the framework of cultural and humanitarian cooperation with Turkey, Ukraine should do the following:**

1. Discuss the mechanisms of Turkish economic aid to Ukraine for the needs of the Crimean Tatars through the Coordination Office of the Turkish TIKA Agency.
2. Pay special attention to contacts between the Ukrainian and Turkish media in order to reciprocally popularize both countries' cultures and coordinate possible joint projects, e.g., on counteracting Russian propaganda. Encourage contacts between academic and educational institutions, libraries, archives, museums, etc.
3. Develop mechanisms for involving the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey in lobbying for joint Ukrainian-Turkish initiatives on the de-occupation of Crimea.
4. Consider the issue of opening Ukrainian language departments and Ukrainian language and culture centers in Turkish universities, similar to the network of Turkish centers in Ukraine. Organize exchange programs for Turkish students, particularly those studying Ukrainian.
5. Support joint historical explorations of Ukrainian and Turkish scholars, for example a project to study the Ottoman sources in the Turkish archives, which is a blank page in the Ukrainian historical science.
6. Support the project to translate and publish the works of Ukrainian writers in Turkey, similar to the Turkish literature popularization project implemented by the Ministry of Culture of Turkey.
7. Facilitate the establishment of joint Ukrainian-Turkish tourist routes for the exploration of historical and cultural heritage of the two countries, which would increase the attractiveness of Ukraine's tourism and recreation industry. Support the popularization of ecological, ethnical, and medical tourism through special information campaigns.

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