

# 3<sup>RD</sup> TURKISH - LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN CONGRESS

Strategic Cooperation and Los Turcos

20 - 22 April 2016, Istanbul





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## STRATEGIC VISION DOCUMENT

### 3<sup>RD</sup> TURKISH-LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CONGRESS “Strategic Cooperation and Los Turcos” ( 20-22 April 2016, Pullman Hotel, Istanbul )

The history of relations between Turkey and Latin American countries goes back to the first decades of 19th century. The migrations of some Ottoman citizens to the places around the region and the diplomatic ties that the Ottomans established with the region's certain countries over the following years became the basis of the relations between the Ottomans and some of the Latin American countries in that period of time. Turkey eventually opened embassies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela. The relations between Turkey and Latin American countries, however, remained at a basic level until 1990s, simply due to challenges posed by geographical distance.

Developments in the field of communication and transportation made possible to shorten distances, opening new horizons on relations with distant regions. Turkey, within the framework of multi-dimensional foreign policy initiatives, developed its relations with countries in its region and around the world, and started to follow an active policy in Latin America and Caribbean, as a part of these initiatives. Due to its rich natural resources and notable success of its growing economies, the region is still of great importance and remains on the agenda. More particularly, within the global economic system, the region encouraged foreign investments and an important part of the global investments accumulated in Latin America.

Turkey has attached importance to the region, and boosted its efficiency and expansions, during last 10 years. Through intensive communication and cooperation between official and civil authorities with a steady momentum, as part of a coherent set of policies and “**Latin America and Caribbean Expansion**” of Turkey, a strategic vision needs to be developed. Considering that the economic potential, richness on natural resources increase the importance of the region within the global economy, no wonder it's quite important partner to Turkey specifically in terms of economic relations.

The region has started to become visible and vitally important with its 605 million inhabitants and a GDP exceeding \$6 trillion and \$1.72 trillion foreign trade, rich natural resources and emerging economy. The region, which was plunged into financial turmoil during 1980s, has recovered from the crisis in 1980s and tended to develop despite its negatively affected institutional structure by global economic crisis. Living standards in the region tended to up and the economic performance of the region measured by the trend in growth of region's per capita GDP, has improved dramatically compared to that of 1980s. Its per capita income is now around \$5,000 or more a year. The decision which is to keep inflation rates lower has been the most notable success of the region's economies.

A considerable amount of foreign investment flows into developing regions has been accumulated in



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Latin America. In 2012, the amount of **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** to the region increased to a high level of \$174 billion, while this figure was just about \$10 billion or less in 1990.

Around 35% of these investments have been made in Brazil, followed by Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Argentina. Most of the investments to those countries have been made by EU, US, Switzerland, Japan, Australia and Canada. When it comes to Turkey's investments to the region, certain activities have been carried out by **Turkish Petroleum International Company (TPIC)** and **Turkish Petroleum (TP,TPAO)** in oil producing countries of the region.

Special regulations and procedures in certain countries of the region about trade relations with US are among the factors making the region attractive to investors of other countries. Most notable example of this procedures or regulations is preferential trade relations of certain Central American and Caribbean countries with US, and the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** membership of Mexico.

European Union-Latin America cooperation representing 60 independent states and more than one-quarter of global GDP can be considered as some sort of strategic partnership that have played predominant role in European Unions' foreign affairs agenda. These relations have gradually increased over last three decades and enabled European Union to take the second place among the foreign investors and trade partners in Latin America. Following the European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean Summit held in Rio de Janeiro (1999), seven summits were held, including Madrid (2002), Guadalajara (2004), Vienna (2006), Lima (2008), and again in Madrid (2010) and that in the more recent Santiago (2013). It was decided that ongoing "**Strategic Partnership**" process between European Union and Latin American countries to be strengthened, as part of "**2013-2015 Action Plan**" published after **Santiago Summit**.

It's observed that China's interest towards the Latin America and Caribbean region has also increased since years of 2000s. Former President of China Hu Jintao had visited the region four times since becoming president and more than twenty-five countries' leaders of the region have visited China as well. Trade relations between China and Latin America and Caribbean have considerably increased recently.

The United States will keep its position as a competing country for the upcoming period in a bid to get an edge over the European Union and China about trade relations with Latin America and Caribbean.

The region has started to become more efficient in global markets through its organizations of economic integration. Increasing interest of the countries such as China, the EU and the US in the region indicates clearly the importance of the region for Turkey as well.

What's more, Turkey's relations with all of 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries are gradually improving in various domains. Trade volume is increasing depending on these developments. Total trade volume of Turkey to the region has increased nine times and is still expanding compared to previous years.



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Therefore a strategic cooperation should also be improved in political, military, cultural, technological and academic areas in order to be maintained increasingly the momentum gained in economic relations between Turkey and the region's countries.

Over the last ten years, Turkey describes its international relations with the different countries of the world as well as with its neighboring countries, within the scope of multi-dimensional and active foreign policy. The **"Latin America and Caribbean Action Plan"** was brought into action by **Turkish Foreign Ministry**, based on this foreign policy, after a series of multilateral meetings held in 1998.

Some initiatives, such as action plan updated as **"2006 Action Plan"** in 2006 and the declaration of **"Latin America and the Caribbean Year"** at the same time, indicates that Turkey's active foreign policy begin to give tangible results. **"2006 Action Plan"**, which brought the participants from different fields together, including industry, trade and economy ministries of Latin American countries, and universities and business world, was an opportunity to meet with both the representatives of Turkey's official institutions and private sector, as well as Turkish honorary consuls and consuls in Latin America-Caribbean countries, and to exchange foreign policy orientations, held between Turkey and Latin American countries as part of **Latin America Week** events on **5-11 June 2006**. And also a series of **Turkish-Latin America and Caribbean congresses** was held with the attendance of a large number of participants, **organized by TASAM**.

With current bilateral and multilateral relations with Latin American-Caribbean region also made a significant contribution to increasing and more institutionalization of diplomatic relations with the region's countries. In this regard, Turkey has initiated a process of negotiation to have a chance of exchanging political ideas with 14 of the region's most important countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela) and signed an **"Action Plan for Strategic Partnership"** with Brazil. Currently there are 13 Turkish embassies in the region, while Latin American and Caribbean countries have 11 representative offices in Turkey. Turkish Airlines flies to 4 of the Latin American and Caribbean countries. Turkey, with 9 commercial attaches to Latin America and Caribbean in general and 3 military attaches to Mexico, Bogota and Brazil, is active now in the region.

A program, as a comprehensive economic and commercial initiative, with the title **"Trade Development Strategy with Latin American Countries"**, started by Turkey Ministry of Economy in order to achieve the aim of economic and commercial relations with Latin American-Caribbean countries, targeted primarily to concluding the commercial and economic agreements with countries in the region. Some agreements brought to a term with 13 countries (Argentina, Brazil Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Chile and Uruguay) as part of this process. In the framework of **Commercial and Economic Cooperation Agreements**, the necessary legal basis for mechanisms of **Joint Economic Commission (JEC)** and favorable conditions was fulfilled.

The countries, which signed **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** with European Union, also have an obligation to sign FTA with Turkey. However, only one agreement was able to be completed between Turkey and



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Chile in 2011. Negotiations between Turkey and Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia about the free trade agreements are proceeding now.

There are some other plans for free trade agreements assumed to be made with **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**, **Central American Integration System (SICA)** and **Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)**.

In 2014, Turkey's trade volume with Brazil (\$2,522bn) has been the highest, compared to the other countries in the region, followed by Mexico (\$1,526bn), Colombia (\$997bn), Chile (\$561bn) and Argentina (\$466bn).

The will to improve relations between Turkey and Latin America and the Caribbean countries also includes the aim of maintaining continuity and eventually to institutionalize this tendency.

The commercial, economic and social relations that will be established with the regions, like Latin America and Caribbean, which can be seen as sort of a new region by Turkey, and lasting friendships based on these relations will play an essential role during the transformation process of Turkey for being able to be a **"World Power"**, by soaring beyond its **"Regional Power"** position.

The signing of "Turkey-Mexico Strategic Cooperation and Partnership Framework for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" during the Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto's visit to Turkey, on 15-19 December 2013, has seen as a quite important development in Turkey. This step for strategic partnership between Turkey and Mexico means a guideline for policies to develop strategic partnerships with the countries of its region.

As a result of the earlier established relations with oil-producing countries of the region Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, through the TPIC organization of **Turkish Petroleum (TP, TPAO)** aimed to improve relations in foreign countries a TPIC office was opened in Bogota, capital city of Colombia. This result is also important because it shows that some institutions needed to be established for cooperative activities to pave the way for high-level strategic cooperation between Turkey and Latin American Countries.

Turkey, which used to be a country that needed to accept technical and humanitarian assistance, has been eventually changed itself to a donor country in recent years. Majority of these activities, due to its historical background, heads for its neighboring areas, and Africa. However, these activities have also reached a point that will make possible to reach and contribute to relatively poor countries of Latin America. In this context, the **Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)** office were opened in Mexico and also there are some initiatives that would be turn into concrete results such as offices in the other 16 countries of Latin America and Caribbean.

There have been so many multi-dimensional and bilateral relations, between Turkey and Latin American and Caribbean countries, which is not necessarily to be listed in here. A number of non-governmental organizations from Turkey are getting started to do some activities in Latin American and Caribbean countries.



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To conclude, further work is needed to be able to bring about a comprehensive bilateral strategic cooperation between Turkey and Latin America and Caribbean. The mental threshold of this process is a **"Sectoral and Financial Deepening"** that still needs to be reached to in order for both sides to qualify for partner status and will be able to make any co-operation possible. In this regard, to make bilateral strategic contributions to a multi-partnership process, which is still carrying on based on multi-dimensional competition, is the main reference of the **3<sup>rd</sup> Turkish-Latin American and Caribbean Congress**.

## Los Turcos

Ottoman Empire, with a reactionary attitude after it started to collapse, followed "absolute control or absolute abandonment" policy and became ineffective on protecting historical, cultural, human capacity in the regions that it left. After Turkish Republic found, because of the strategic reasons such as conditions of the time, economic problems and Westernizations, serious steps could not been taken in old Ottoman countries and groups. However, a country which struggles to solve problems left from Ottoman legacy, such as Armenian problem, needs to build a capacity in overseas. Otherwise, it is being in need of help of reliability controversial groups or lobbying event, and this cause an unstable view on Turkish foreign policy.

Problems that caused from an absence of influence overseas does not only affect political and military areas but it also affects economic area. It is not a rational attitude that a country having to struggle all difficulties of being successor of Ottoman Empire, could not benefit from its heritage. In fact, especially Turkey but all sides of the Ottoman dissolution process affected negatively from that process.

At this point, relations need to be improved with the Ottomans ("Los Turcos" in regional name) who immigrated to Latin America for several reasons. Whereby **"Los Turcos"** is going to have serious contributions on improving Turkish Republic's relations with Latin America counties on political, economic and cultural areas. Emigration from Ottoman Empire to Latin America countries started in 1840s.

In general, Muslims who live in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Anatolia, Maronite Christians, Druses, Jews and Armenians joined to these emigrations. However, there were also partial emigrations from other areas. Emigrations divided into two groups which are between 1840-1890 and 1890-1951. Emigrations between 1840-1890 happened generally because of internal, after 1890 mainly happened because of external reasons.

**During 1840-1890**, emigration started not only from Ottoman lands, also from Far East countries such as China to American continent which accepted as **"New World"** because of economic opportunities. Other than this, internal and external reasons can be listed as:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Regional (Syria-Palestine) economic problems after Suez Channel opened.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Regional disagreements because of some countries', such as Great Britain, France, Russia, Austria and Prussia, intervention based on religious and race differences.



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- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Occurrence of some problems between Druses, Muslims, Maronite and Jews in 1860, countries who seek to be influential on these groups converted it to an international issue. As a result of this, an agreement signed between Ottoman Empire and countries who mentioned above. Region became autonomous and a Christian governor sent to govern the region.
- 4<sup>th</sup>: In 1843, with the Kura Law, Cizye tax which collected from non-Muslims converted to “Bedelat-ı Askeriye - Military Service Fee” but people of the region did not have the economic power to pay it.

**After 1890**, the main reason of the emigration is wars between countries (First World War etc.) and their effect on minorities and also Ottoman citizens showed major interest to need of worker posed by industrialization because of their economic problems. After 1908, “**Bedelat-ı Askeriye - Military Service Fee**” removed and military service became an obligation for non-Muslims and men who are over 15 recruited. As a result of this, some non-Muslim families wanted to leave the country before their children become 15. There has been emigration to Latin America also in republic period. For instance, after 1934 situations, a number of Jew citizens immigrated to Latin America.

Until 1896, exodus from Cebel-i Lübnan (Lebanon Mountains) and other areas was forbidden. Reason for this was preventing loss of population, tax and weak Ottoman image in overseas. However, it was difficult to prevent emigration. Because immigrants were moving secretly and using “Mürur Tezkireleri - Provision of Road or Certificate of Passage” as a passport (they were accepted as passport if they did not specified as “It is reserved for “Dahiliye - Ministry of Domestic Affairs” then travelled first from Beirut to Marseille and then to America continent with steamships. Immigrants intensely went to North and South America (Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Venezuela), Caribbean and Cuba. In order to be accepted easily, most of the Muslim Immigrants hide their religious identity and registered themselves as Armenian, Jewish or Greek as they have stronger communities in Latin America.

**During 1867-1881**, 60 thousand Ottoman Citizen immigrated to **New World**. It is a serious number since it is equal to one third of the total immigrant number from Asia to America. In the period of **1908-1912**, Ottoman citizens were 5<sup>th</sup> biggest immigrant society in Brazil and 6<sup>th</sup> biggest immigrant society in Argentina. Although they named as Arabic in several places, immigrants mostly named as “**Los Turcos**” (Turks) in Spanish and by the time, this name became their general name. Also, immigrants considered themselves as Ottoman rather than their ethnic and religious identity. The most obvious indication of this that they used “Ottoman” expression in the associations and foundation they established.

Immigrants worked in subclass jobs such as grocery, haberdashery, itinerant trade but in time, they become a prominent power in economic and political life. Carlos Slim Helu, who was selected as richest man in the world in 2007 and famous in worldwide, is one of the sons of these immigrants. His father Julian (Yusuf) Slim (Selim) Haddad immigrated to Mexico in 1902 and became a prominent businessman in time. One other is Carlos Menem (El Turco nicknamed) who was president of Argentina between 189-1999. He was a son of Syrian Muslim father but chose Christianity when he started his political life. Other than these, worldwide famous singer Shakira is a Lebanon-born, Colombian “Los Turcos”.



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At present time, "**Los Turcos**" makes a considerable amount of Latin American population. For instance, Brazil 9 million, Argentina 3.5 million, Venezuela 1.6 million Chile 1 million, Mexico 1.1 million, Columbia 800 thousand and addition of other countries put together a population of 20 million people.

Turkish Republic had a little interest on Ottoman citizens in Latin America until the present time. Other than Turkey, because of their Arab ethnic identity, countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar built mosque, established foundations and education centers for Muslims. However not many other has been done for them.

Any international scientific event did not organized yet and number of scientific research about the topic is not sufficient enough. Therefore, Turkey's interest and attention should be increased since it is the successor of the country that these immigrants, who belongs to different ethnic and religion groups, left long years ago. This situation is going to be a positive step for a historical fidelity to these people, development of current and future developments on relations between Turkey and Latin America countries on political, economic and cultural areas which will also serve to Turkey's interests.

Finally, invitation of famous people in politics and economics such as Carlos Slim and Carlos Menem as well as Turkish government officials make Forum and works that is going to be done more influential and helps it to spread to the masses.

The purpose of Forum is determining the reasons of migrations to Latin America, ethnic and religious features of immigrants, and the process from past to today. Also, within the framework of new foreign policy that is determined under the "**New Turkey**", contributing to initiatives on meet up again this society who left or had to left from Ottoman lands and calls themselves "**Turks**" or even built new beginnings and communication ways

We hope that **3<sup>rd</sup> Turkish-Latin American and Caribbean Congress** under theme of "**Strategic Cooperation and Los Turcos**" will have important contributions in this respect. Congress aims a comprehensive exchange of views through coming together representatives of countries of the region, representative of Turkish public and private organizations and also papers that will be presented by invited speakers





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## Key Actors | Formation of Strategic Co-operation:

### Turkey & Latin American & Caribbean Countries

Turkey

Brazil

Mexico

Argentina

Venezuela

Cuba

Uruguay

Chile

Colombia

Peru

Paraguay

Guatemala

Equator

Bolivia

Dominican Republic

Costa Rica

## Key Actors | Contribution To Strategic Partnership:

### Organizations & Expert Institutions

#### Organizations

The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)

Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK)

Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade (DTM)

The Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSiAD)

Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD)

Trade Association for Caribbean and Latin America (TUKLAD)

Counterpart Organizations in LAC Countries



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## Expert Institutions

Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA)

CDOSCO

INTER AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Latin American Integration Association (ALADI)

Center for Economic Research and Policy Community Action (CIEPAC)

IGNIA

FUNDIES

The Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES)

## Key Actors | Intellectual Contribution To Strategic Partnership:

Civil Society Organizations/NGOs

Think Tanks

Universities

Regional Organizations

## Main Theme

Strategic Cooperation and Los Turcos

## Sub-Themes

Strategic Emergence Association between Turkey and Latin America

Turkish Foreign Policy Activism in Latin America: High-Level Visits, Trade and Soft Power

Ottoman-Latin American Relations: Diplomacy, Commerce & Migration

Ottoman Citizens' Cultural and Religious Heritage in Latin America

Early Diplomatic Relations between Latin America and the Republic of Turkey

The Caribbean in the Turkish International Activism

Humanitarian and Developmental Aid: New Dimension in the Inter-regional relations

America and Turkey New Approaches to Global Governance

Regional Organizations and Inter-regional Cooperation with Turkey: the cases of the Pacific Alliance and MERCOSUR

Fighting Against Common Threats: Terrorism, Organized Crime and Cybercrime

Distant Actors, Common process: Comparative Perspectives between Turkey and Latin America