



TURKEY-IRAN *Forum*

“New Economy Ecosystem and
Strategic Sectors”



STRATEGIC VISION DOCUMENT

INITIATIVE EASTERN ANATOLIA
4TH TURKEY - IRAN FORUM

“New Economy Ecosystem and Strategic Sectors”

(05-06 November 2018, Tabriz)

Turkey and Iran; as the two countries that have potential of being regional powers and sharing common historical and cultural values, have always been in relation even though there have been occasional ups and downs. The strong historical infrastructure, administrative accumulation and cultural dominance of both of these nations cause this relation to be non-hegemonic and partly competitive, but at the same time sustained in an interaction between equals. This is the unique element that ensures the continuity of the interaction between the two countries.

In current world system, where bilateral economic relations are mostly reflected on other relation fields directly or indirectly, actual state of Turkey-Iran relations seems to be moving reversely. It is observed that volume and depth of economic relations can not reach the levels they deserve, and besides, developments in economic relations seem to be dependent on the developments in security and international politics. Today, we confront this as a fact that the two countries are far from reaching the trade volume target of at least **30 billion dollars** determined by their respective authorities. In 2016, when the import-export ratio with Iran is balanced on a quantity basis, the volume of foreign trade is only 9.6 billion dollars. Imports from Iran in 2016 decreased by about 25% to \$ 4,699 billion, while exports to Iran reached \$ 4,966 billion with an increase of about 38%. Obviously, it is necessary to take serious and concrete steps to reach the target volume of foreign trade within these data.

The recent developments and the experiences of these developments under the influence of intra-regional and extraterritorial forces have pushed the two countries to take important steps towards transforming the conflicting interests of these two neighbors in the real-political arena into competition; then transforming this competition into regional cooperation. The "**Nuclear Negotiation Process**", which US President Donald Trump has a clear negative attitude after he has taken the power, and thus has interrupted on a large scale, appears to be a partial disappointment for Iran as well as an incentive to regional co-operation. However, Turkey, as regional and international developments push her so, also tends to search for alternative steps leading to alternative cooperations. These political developments seem to close Iran and Turkey up.

With the last meeting of **High Level Cooperation Council** as a joint initiative of Turkey and Iran performed in October 2017 at the highest level, it is observed that decisions taken were very important steps towards the development of bilateral relations. Effective and concrete decisions like the use of national currencies in bilateral trade, both countries to mutually open branches of national banks, encouraging the investment of Turkish firms in Iran's energy development investment, border Gates like Dogubeyazit, Kapıköy and Esendere to be open for 24 hours, will be effective in reaching the target of 30 billion dollars trade volume in the coming period.

Eastern Anatolia in Turkey - Iran Relations

Eastern Anatolia and Ağrı province has had a strategic location not only for Iran - Turkey connection but also for the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Black Sea countries. Furthermore, Eastern Anatolia has been one of the key cities in bilateral political and economic relations throughout history. Ağrı has been a stakeholder of economic, cultural competition and cooperation on the border with Iran, thru the history.

Today, Eastern Anatolia plays the role of an exit door for Turkey through Iran to Central and South Asia as well as the Caucasus countries. Likewise for Iran, it is the access point to all European countries and European World.

Within the context of economic relations' contribution to political relations; signing a preferential trade agreement between Iran and Turkey, establishment of a free trade zone, modernization of border crossings, opening of new border crossings, development of relations between commerce and industry chambers, intensification of cooperation between Iranian & Turkish Business Councils, organizing effective fairs for mutual trade, development of opportunities for - highway, - railway and airway, creating close relations between twin towns, establishing effective civil society in both countries are important topics for mutual relations.

In addition, the development of Turkey - Iran relations will make major contribution to the economic development of Ağrı and the Eastern Anatolia Region. The development of trade and economic relations of the two countries will also contribute to the solution of socio-economic problems in Ağrı and Eastern Anatolian cities.

Turkey - Iran Forum

The main objective of the events to be held in **2018** in **Tabriz** is to provide the mutual deepening of the economies of Iran and Turkey with strategic contribution; privately at cities and generally at the whole of Turkey. The main theme of 3. Turkey - Iran Forum performed in 2017; "**30-50 Billion Dollars Opportunities for Trade Volume**", was the main agenda of last High Level Cooperation Council meeting where Turkish and Iranian presidents came together.

The necessity for the elimination of border transportation problems urgently, the working of transportation corridors without problem, optimization of time in trade process, and the necessity of reflecting concrete policies on the field were other main topics discussed in the third Forum and it was decided to make arrangements about the border gates. In this context, it can be said that the Forum Initiative has reached an experience that is not far from the real situation and solution-producing.

4. Turkey - Iran Forum, within all these developments and in the new era that bilateral economic relations seems to enter, aims to take steps towards financial and sectoral deepening on the basis of "high competition - high cooperation" and to support the political and strategic will. The establishment of strategic targets in line with the "**Prior Sectors**" determined by the experiences gained and the results of the studies have an important place in the process of development and institutionalization of the economic relations of the two countries.

Main Theme

New Economy Ecosystem and Strategic Sectors

Prior Sectors

Public Diplomacy Language and Education

Culture and Tourism

Building, Construction and Infrastructure

Energy Petrochemical and Investment

Logistics, Transport and Communications

Banking and Finance (Strategic Investment Fund)

Economy and Trade

Media and Communication

Science and technology

Institutionalization in Trade, and Business Culture

ACTIVITY PLAN 2018-2019 (DRAFT)

Sector Workshops (3 Meetings)

Culture, Tourism and Media Workshop

Education, Science and Industry Workshop

Energy, Infrastructure and Logistics Workshop

Workshops will be held with invitation of the media, businessmen and their organizations, and the participation of mutual border / regional authorities [governors, development agencies, universities, local governments, equivalent institutions etc.] will be encouraged.

Strategic Reports (3 Documents)

Publishing sector studies as strategic reports for decision-makers, private sector, media and the public of the two countries. Providing literature and memory support.

TV Shows / Media Conferences

Creation agenda on local and national media.

Preparation of Research Projects and Reports (2 Pieces)

Preparing coordination and research projects / reports with academicians and universities in prior areas, which support the process and cooperation.

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