

GREEN ECONOMY AS A NEW VECTOR OF COOPERATION BETWEEN TURKIYE AND CENTRAL ASIA: POTENTIAL AND PROSPECTS**Abdusattorova Ezoabonu Abduaziz kizi**

MA in International Relations, UWED

+998975234709

ezoabonu1311@gmail.com

Abstract: In the context of the growing climate agenda and the global transition toward sustainable development models, the green economy has become a key direction of international cooperation. This article analyzes the potential and prospects for developing the green economy as a new vector of interaction between the Republic of Turkiye and the Central Asian countries. It explores their institutional, economic, and technological capacities for establishing sustainable partnerships in renewable energy, environmentally friendly technologies, agriculture, and investment. Special attention is given to Ankara's policy within the framework of the “*Yeşil Mutabakat Eylem Planı*” (Green Transformation) and the efforts of Central Asian countries to diversify their economies and reduce their carbon footprint. Based on current initiatives, intergovernmental agreements, and strategic programs, the study identifies the main factors that promote and hinder the integration of the green economy.

Keywords: Green economy, Republic of Turkiye, Central Asia, SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), green technologies, energy cooperation, climate policy.

Introduction

Modern civilization is facing a complex set of interrelated challenges that profoundly affect all aspects of social life. Among the most significant are climate change, loss of biodiversity, depletion of natural resources, socio-economic instability, and the growth of global risks, including the spread of biological weapons such as infectious diseases. These processes are accompanied by disruptions of ecological balance and an increasing burden on all areas of sustainable development, limiting their potential for realization.

Undoubtedly, under current conditions, special importance is attached to the epidemiological situation caused by the new viral infection – COVID-19. The coronavirus pandemic of the 21st century has imposed new realities on human life: governments introduced strict quarantine measures and restricted mobility, organizations switched employees to remote work, educational institutions adopted distance learning formats, and the entertainment industry moved largely into the digital sphere.

According to the International Monetary Fund, this epidemic caused severe damage to the global economy. During the coronavirus crisis, the state of the world economy proved to be even more vulnerable and unstable compared to the global financial crisis of 2008-2009: there was a sharp decline in production and international trade, a drop in employment, as well as growing social inequality and deepening debt risks in developing countries.[1]

Against this background, particular interest is drawn to the Turkish economy, which, despite external threats, demonstrates active efforts to adapt to new realities. In the post-pandemic recovery period, the Turkish government focuses on strategies for sustainable growth, “green transformation,” and the expansion of international cooperation – particularly with the countries of Central Asia. This development vector is seen as an instrument for strengthening regional integration and diversifying foreign economic relations amid global instability.

Today, the economy of the Republic of Turkiye is one of the most dynamically developing in the world. The main sources of income include tourism, the service sector, and logistics. Its energy industry also occupies a strategically important position in the country's economic development, as Turkiye's favorable geographic location allows it to implement large-scale projects for transporting oil and gas from Russia to Europe (via the Middle East).

In recent years, trends toward the transition to renewable energy sources and the rejection of hydrocarbon fuels have become increasingly prominent in European Union countries. This process is inseparably linked to the transition to sustainable development (SDGs).[2] Following these global trends, Turkiye has also embarked on a path of transformation, seeking to rethink its model of economic development. At the same time, Ankara's logistics sector faces challenges associated with the rapid development of electric vehicles. While maritime and air transport are not yet planning to change their fuel systems, the automotive industry is undergoing accelerated transformation – from the abandonment of internal combustion engines to the widespread adoption of hybrid and electric vehicles. The state actively supports environmentally friendly modes of transportation.

The development of the electric vehicle industry inevitably leads to increased demand for electricity, which requires large-scale expansion of generation capacity. In this regard, the issue of the environmental cleanliness of the energy used becomes extremely important – how “green” will the electricity powering electric vehicles actually be? This challenge is relevant not only for the Republic of Turkiye but also for Central Asia, where new logistics and energy routes are being formed. Ankara is actively participating in regional projects and initiatives for the development of renewable energy.

According to the World Bank, under the *Europe and Central Asia Renewable Energy Scale-up* program, Turkiye is implementing projects to expand the distributed solar energy market and to pilot a national battery storage program in support of the country's National Energy Plan. [3] In addition, the Republic of Turkiye is one of the founding members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), established in 1985, which aims to support the development of Central Asian countries, remove trade barriers within the ECO region, promote intra-regional trade, and facilitate the integration of ECO member states into global markets.[4]

In early 2021, the Turkish government published its *National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP)* for 2011-2023 [5], while the 12th *National Development Plan (NDP)* for 2024-2028 dedicates an entire section to the transformation of the state toward green and digital development. Moreover, Ankara announced its “net-zero” and “green development” goals for 2053.[6] The goal of decarbonization by 2053 represents one of the most ambitious climate strategies in recent years. At the same time, the government aims to increase solar energy capacity to 52.9 gigawatts (GW) by 2035 and has signed a USD 1 billion agreement with the World Bank to expand solar energy infrastructure and pilot a battery storage program.[7]

These initiatives by Ankara find their logical continuation in the regional context within the framework of the *Organization of Turkic States (OTS)*. In official OTS documents such as the *Turkic World Vision – 2040* and the *OTS Strategy for 2022-2026*, environmental protection and climate change are identified as priority areas of national and collective policy among member states. These documents emphasize the importance of joint action to prevent and respond to natural and man-made disasters and to mitigate their consequences.[8]

To expand cooperation in areas such as water resource management, drought prevention, and other environmental issues, on November 10, 2022, in Samarkand, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the OTS Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary to establish the *OTS Institute for Drought Prevention*. The Institute began its

activities this year at the OTS Representative Office in Budapest. During the COP29 meeting, a discussion among Turkic states was held on “The OTS Partnership on Climate, Innovation, Green Economy, and Trade.” Several agreements were signed among member states, including one on launching the *OTS Forum on Climate-Resilient Villages*. This initiative will contribute to the “greening” of regional environments and will have a positive impact on rural development policies to improve people’s quality of life.

As President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted during COP29, “The economic effect of this project will be felt by all our countries. Thousands of jobs will be created, the energy infrastructure will develop, technological and business ties will expand, and most importantly, the standard of living of our population will rise.” This agreement will be achieved through the improvement of digital infrastructure, public services, and the use of solar, wind, and hydropower resources.[9]

Coordinated actions by the Turkic states through joint efforts will inevitably lead to positive outcomes in the near future. A vivid example of this is a new stage of cooperation in the field of green finance, implemented during the 11th *OTS Summit* at the end of 2024 in Bishkek. Participants of the summit included Acting President of the Kyrgyz Stock Exchange Aida Chodulova, Chairman of the Central Bank of Azerbaijan Taleh Kazimov, CEO of the Astana International Financial Centre Renat Bekturov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkiye Hakan Fidan. Among these representatives, the *Turkic Council on Green Finance* was established, and a multilateral Memorandum was signed to promote green and sustainable finance in the Turkic region.[10]

The parties signing the memorandum reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the principles of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the provisions of the Paris Agreement, achieving carbon neutrality, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, Turkiye, as a member of the OTS, has significant prospects for further cooperation and expansion of its influence in Central Asia. For instance, the Central Asian region is witnessing a growing interest in renewable energy sources, and Turkiye can actively participate in the development of energy projects such as solar and wind power plants. Another promising direction is the development of the transport sector through the promotion of the Turkish-made electric vehicle *TOGG*, whose most affordable model, with a 160-kilowatt battery, can travel up to 314 km on a single charge.[11]

Conclusion

Thus, the development of a green economy and sustainable models of interaction between Turkiye and the Central Asian countries represents an important component of cooperation in the face of global environmental and economic challenges. Turkiye is not only transforming its own energy system toward sustainable development but is also making a significant contribution to advancing the green economy in Central Asia by promoting environmentally friendly logistics routes within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States. Moreover, amid the growing interest in electric vehicles in the Central Asian region, the Turkish brand *TOGG* has the potential to expand beyond the domestic market and become part of the regional environmental infrastructure, serving as an instrument of “green diplomacy.” However, the successful implementation of green economy mechanisms requires overcoming technological and financial constraints, which calls for continued joint efforts among the Turkic republics.

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