
Diálogos

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What are the main precedents of the relationship between Turkey and Argentina?

The beginning of the relations between Turkey and Argentina backs to 1910 when a consular protocol signed between two countries. This year is the 103th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Our governments share the same values and principles, namely, democracy, respect for and protection of human rights, peaceful settlement of disputes, and dialogue and tolerance among peoples. Both countries are the leading countries of the world in terms of their contribution to the peacekeeping operations of the UN and share similar positions regarding the reformation of multilateral institutions. In the international arena, we have close cooperation with Argentina. Our cooperation within the United Nations and the G-20 are the two main examples.

How is the current state of relations? What are the main areas of cooperation in the region and the country?

Turkey aims to develop its relations with the Latin American countries within the framework of its policy of opening up to Latin America. In this regard, Turkey aspires to establish a strong cooperation with Argentina as it does with the rest of the countries of the region. We wish to develop our relations with MERCOSUR as well. In this respect, the first consultation meeting was held on 23 May 2013. We are willing to sign a free trade agreement with MERCOSUR.

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***What are the main agreements signed with Argentina?
What are the most active issues on the agenda?***

There are quite a number of agreements between Turkey and Argentina on a lot of issues. Some are:

- Protocol on Consular Relations (1910) - Friendship Treaty (1926) - Agreement on Cultural Cooperation (1965) - Agreement for Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (1988) - Agreement on Visa Exemption (1992) - Agreement on Economic and Trade Cooperation (1992) - Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion And Protection of Investments (1992) - Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism (1992) - Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Health (1993) - Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation (1995) - Agreement on Fighting against International Smuggling of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, International Terrorism and Organized Crimes (1995)

What can you say about the cooperation of Argentina and Turkey in the G20?

Given the ongoing shift of balance in the global economy in favor of the emerging market economies, the G-20, covering both advanced and emerging economies, has become the most appropriate platform for international economic cooperation and policy coordination. Turkey will host the G-20 Summit in 2015. We attach great importance to our G-20 Presidency in 2015, and have already started preparing for it. In the lead-up to our Presidency, we are ready to engage in enhanced bilateral coordination and consultation with all related partners with a view to exchange views and share experiences.

***What is the situation of the Turkey-Argentina trade and investment?
What can be done to improve investment and trade relations Argentina and Turkey?***

A decade ago, in 2003, bilateral trade between Turkey and Argentina had a volume of 276 million USD and it was increased to 900 million USD in 2008. Unfortunately the international crisis has affected negatively our bilateral trade as well, and the volume plummeted to 300 million USD in 2009. However it picked up after the crisis and it has reached the level of 700 million USD again. This year in nine months we already have a trade volume of 540 million USD that corresponds to a 10% increase comparing to the same period of 2012.

The balance in our bilateral trade is in favour of Argentina as Turkey has been experiencing a trade deficit. Turkey traditionally exports industrial prod-

ucts to Argentina, such as automotive and its spare parts, machinery, iron and steel, rubber along with certain agricultural products such as tobacco, hazelnuts, and some preserved food. On our importation from Argentina, agricultural products have the main share, soy and its derivatives being the leading product with a share of 68%. We also import automotive and its parts, wool and machinery from Argentina

Actually, our bilateral trade is dominated by a few commodities on both Sides. From our side, solely automotive and its spare parts constitutes 68% of Turkey's exports to Argentina. The first ten products in terms of value that Turkey and Argentina export to each other cover 94% of their exports.

This is a clear sign that we have to diversify the composition of our bilateral trade. And obviously there is a room for increasing the trade volume as well.

The level of bilateral investments is far from satisfactory. There are three companies in Argentina with Turkish capital and their total investments is at the level 27 million USD. Our biggest investment, Kordsa Argentina S.A., is a producer of the input for tyre manufacturing.

In Turkey there are four companies with an Argentine capital but the total investment is at the level of 300,000 USD.

We need to create awareness about each other's markets, the possibilities and opportunities for trade and investments. However, we have to explain to the business circles all the pros and cons in each other's country in order to show them a realistic picture. They have to be informed about the relevant legislation, implementation of the legislation, the practicalities, as well as all the possible difficulties, and sensitivities that they may have to encounter when doing business. To this aim, informative seminars can be held both at national and regional level. Publications will be helpful as well. Articles and booklets specifying certain aspects will be a key to create this awareness.

Trade Missions is another option for increasing the existing level of bilateral trade. Both Turkey and Argentina are very active for organising Trade Missions to different countries which is one of the main instruments to boost the trade and investment relations. Considering the availability of the business climate, such an organisation will contribute positively.

In this context, fairs and exhibitions are important to mention too. Those events are very beneficial for establishing new business contacts and having a chance to examine the quality of the products.

Our bilateral trade has an increasing trend but obviously it can increase more rapidly if it can be supported with suitable instruments.

What are your key priorities in making Turkey better known in Argentina?

Our aim is to promote our country in Argentina. The Air Services Agreement which was signed during Mrs. President's visit to Turkey in 2010 has already

borne its fruits. Today, seven days of the week we have direct flights via Sao Paulo between Istanbul and Buenos Aires.

Ten media members from Argentina were hosted in Turkey between 8-14 August 2013 by the sponsorship of our Embassy, Turkish Airlines and Hilton Hotels Istanbul Management. Turkish Airlines attended the International Latin American Fair that took place between 14-17 September in Buenos Aires.

What are the main cultural offers of Turkey to Argentina and the Latin American region?

We believe that cultural relations strengthen mutual understanding among countries, create an appropriate platform for joint action. The focus of cultural activity is to acquaint outsiders with all aspects of Turkish society. It is to introduce to the world, through various activities, the values, history, language and literature, archaeological assets, scientific achievements, art, architecture, cuisine, traditions, beliefs, role models and sports peculiar to our country.

Our approach is to utilize the universal language of culture and art, and to realize activities that will leave a lasting impression in the minds of people. To this end, Turkey organizes exhibitions and conferences abroad on Turkish culture, contributes to organizations of Week of Turkey, Year of Turkey events and festivals, takes part in existing festivals and cultural events, and produces promotional documentaries and publications.

In 2014 Turkey will inaugurate the office of the Cultural and Tourism Attaché in Sao Paulo/Brazil. We believe that it will greatly contribute to Turkey's cultural and tourism relations with the Latin American countries.

Finally, in terms of education, what are the Turkish scholarships for Argentinian students who want to study in Turkey?

What is your policy on academic cooperation between Argentine and Turkey?

Republic of Turkey is willing to provide research scholarships for international students and researchers within the scope of "Türkiye Scholarship Program". On the other hand, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) aims to grant scholarships for international students and students from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) seeking to pursue a graduate degree in Turkey. The scholarship covers the fields of Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technological Sciences, Medical Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities.

The Mevlana Exchange Programme aims the exchange of students and academic staff between the Turkish higher education institutions and higher education institutions of other countries. According to the programme stu-

dents may study abroad for one (minimum) or two (maximum) terms and academic staff may lecture abroad from one week (minimum) to three months (maximum).

In addition, the Diplomatic Academy of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Turkey invites young diplomats to the International Young Diplomats Education Program each year. The program contains seminars given on international political issues, Turkish foreign policy and diplomacy by academicians, retired ambassadors and career diplomats of the Foreign Ministry; opportunity for the participants to promote their countries; social activities and visits to historical and touristic regions of Turkey.