

Statement by H.E. Mr. Özdil Nami, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers (Tehran, 26th November, 2013)

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,**

It is a distinct honour and privilege for me to address the twenty first meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I extend to you all the heartfelt greetings of the Cypriot people and our government.

Excellencies,

I would like to extend my thanks to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the fraternal hospitality extended myself and my delegation from the moment of our arrival in Tehran.

Furthermore, I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization and the able staff of ECO Secretariat for their tireless efforts in organizing this important meeting.

**Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,**

The TRNC has higher education and tourism as its two main economic sectors.

We have eight internationally recognized universities accommodating nearly 61 thousand (61,000) students from all over the world. In this context, we would welcome a decision by the Member States, to include our universities in the available options for the higher education of their youth. It is our primary objective to increase even further the number of students from ECO countries studying at our universities in the period ahead.

Our country with its unspoiled natural beauties, rich cultural heritage, ECO Tourism opportunities and many other attractions is the ideal holiday destination for our brothers and sisters from ECO member countries.

We are actively encouraging foreign investment to North Cyprus and therefore I would like to take this opportunity to invite investors from the member countries to Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to learn more about the investment opportunities in our country and the incentives offered by our government.

Investment opportunities exist especially in the tourism sector. Hotels and conference tourism, special interest tourism like yacht tourism and marina construction are just a few of the investment opportunities that await foreign businessmen in our country. In addition to above mentioned fields, newly developing areas such as health tourism and agri-industry are considered as attractive fields of investment for the private sector and foreign investors.

Consequently, those wishing to invest in North Cyprus can be sure of a positive government attitude. In this connection, our government with its relevant ministries and the Cyprus Turkish investment promotion agency is at your disposal.

We have already successfully welcomed first ECO University Games in North Cyprus. We are ready to do more and be an active participant in order to strength our mutual ties.

Your Excellencies,

In 2014, my people had vote “yes” for a comprehensive settlement plan supported by all Member States of the UN to unite Cyprus yet the Greek Cypriot side voted “no”. Faced with this situation UN Secretary General of the time called all Member States of the UN to establish bilateral and multilateral relations with Turkish Cypriot State in order to put an end to their isolation. Your invitation to us to be a part of ECO is one of the few concrete steps taken by the international community. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkish State, let me say that we are grateful to you all.

Your excellencies allow me to finish thanking again to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ECO Secretariat for their efforts in making this meeting a great success.

I thank you all for your most kind attention.

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Halil Akinci, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers (Tehran, 26th November, 2013)

**Mr. Chairman,
Esteemed Ministers,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,**

First of all I would like to thank Your Excellency Mr. Chairman for giving me an opportunity to address the 21st Meeting of the Council of Ministers.

At the outset as representative of an observer organization, the members of which are also members of ECO, I would like to brief you about the activities of our organization most of which run parallel and complementary to the activities of ECO and in line with its objectives.

Acting on the basis of strong political will of Heads of State, Turkic Council has moved towards removing barriers that stand before cooperation and undertaking initiatives for more focused and wider cooperation among its Member States with a view to transform bilateral cooperation that exists between Member States into coordinated multilateral cooperation among them. Regular meetings of experts and heads of customs, transport and economic ministries have been held to achieve this end. Equally, cooperation in the field of culture and education, as well as collaboration among Diasporas and universities demonstrate strong commitment of our Member States to closer and widened cooperation. For example, a few days ago Turkic Council Ministers of Education met in Eskisehir, Turkey to discuss cooperation in the field of education. The decisions taken at this meeting are already leading to measures for their implementation. Concurrently several documents were concluded to serve as legal basis for further collaboration.

Since development of private sector can play a crucial role in expanding trade and investment links between countries and materialize the opportunities of interregional cooperation more active public-private cooperation is encouraged.

It is a very satisfying fact that the first organization to which we were granted Observer status a year ago is ECO. During this year representatives of our organization have participated at the 23rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council. To consolidate and deepen cooperation between our organizations Secretariat of Turkic Council has prepared and forwarded to the Secretariat of ECO "Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization" for consideration. We hope that this MoU will be ready for signature soon.

Today when we are faced with political, socio-economic, cultural and scientific challenges there is a strong need to cooperate decisively in order to confront these challenges and undertake required initiatives to overcome them.

Signing of this MoU will open up new opportunities for further cooperation between the two organizations. Furthermore, information and documentation relating to specific projects or programmes may also be exchanged between Turkic Council Secretariat and ECO Secretariat with a view to attaining better complementarity of action and effective coordination between the two organizations.

At the same time meetings between Secretary Generals of ECO and Turkic Council, where issues of common interest are discussed, already take place.

The experience of ECO in various sectors is of great interest to Turkic council. Thus, closer ECO-Turkic Council dialogue can enhance collaboration between the two organizations.

In conclusion, I would like to wish success to this Meeting and attainment of desirable results for all participants.

Thank you for your kind attention.
