

Türkiye's OTS chairmanship and the digital economy agreement

Summit on 29–30 October; the agreement enters into force once all members ratify it

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On 30 October, Türkiye takes over the rotating chairmanship of the Organization of Turkic States from Azerbaijan. The most concrete measure of its chairmanship will be whether the digital economy agreement signed by the member states in 2024 enters into force.

The 13th Summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) meets in Ankara on 29–30 October. According to the programme reported by Anadolu Agency (AA) on 26 October, foreign ministers will meet on 29 October and heads of state and government on 30 October. At the leaders' meeting, hosted by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan under the theme "Turkic Century: Unity in Language, Thought, and Deed", Türkiye will take over from Azerbaijan the rotating chairmanship, which lasts until the next ordinary summit. Trade and investment, transport, energy and digital transformation, together with strengthening the organisation's institutional structure, are prominent on the agenda.

In Stratigma's assessment, the most concrete measure of Türkiye's chairmanship will be whether the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement enters into force. The agreement, signed by the member states in 2024, will not enter into force until all five members have ratified it. As chair, Türkiye will be in a position to keep this ratification process on the organisation's agenda.

The organisation's structure and chairmanship

The OTS was founded by the Nakhchivan Agreement, signed on 3 October 2009 in the Azerbaijani city of Nakhchivan. Originally named the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, the organisation adopted its current name at the Istanbul Summit on 12 November 2021. The same summit adopted the Turkic World Vision 2040, a document setting out the organisation's goals and priority areas of cooperation. The organisation's secretariat is based in Istanbul.

The organisation has five full members: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Türkiye. The four countries other than Uzbekistan are founding members; Uzbekistan joined in 2019. Hungary, Turkmenistan and the Turkish Republic of Northern

Cyprus have observer-country status. The Economic Cooperation Organization, a regional economic body separate from the OTS, has observer-organisation status.

The chairmanship passes to the country hosting the ordinary summit. Azerbaijan therefore took over the chairmanship from Kyrgyzstan at the 12th Summit, held in the city of Gabala on 7 October 2025. The same summit decided that the next ordinary summit would be held in Türkiye in autumn 2026. In a statement on 3 October this year, Türkiye's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the 13th Summit would be hosted by Türkiye on 29–30 October.

The digital economy agreement

Scope of the agreement

The agreement's full title is the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement among the Governments of the Member States of the Organization of Turkic States. It was signed on 6 November 2024 at the 11th Summit in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. According to a statement by Türkiye's Ministry of Trade in June, the agreement aims to remove barriers between member states to e-commerce, digital services and commercial activities based on cross-border data use.

According to the ministry's statement, the agreement sets common rules for payments and money transfers, paperless trade, logistics, e-invoicing and express delivery services. Paperless trade means that trade documents are issued and processed electronically rather than on paper. Electronic signatures, online consumer protection and personal data protection also fall within its scope. The agreement further provides for cooperation on small and medium-sized enterprises, cybersecurity and competition policy. The ministry said the agreement would make it easier for companies to access digital markets and would increase the region's competitiveness.

Ratification and trade data

International agreements are ratified in each country according to its own constitutional procedure. Azerbaijan was the first to ratify the digital economy agreement, followed by Uzbekistan. In Türkiye, under Article 90 of the Constitution, an international agreement can be ratified only after the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TBMM) approves it by law. That law was published in the Official Gazette on 20 June, making Türkiye the third country to complete its domestic approval process. Türkiye's ratification alone is not enough, however: the agreement will enter into force once all members have ratified it. According to the Ministry of Trade's June statement, this required Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to complete their ratification processes as well.

Because of this condition, the agreement's effect on Türkiye's trade also depends on the ratification processes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. According to an AA compilation based on Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) data, Türkiye's trade with the other four full members amounted to about 17 billion dollars in 2025. Ministry of Trade data reported by the Daily Sabah newspaper on 4 September are consistent with this total. According to these data, Kazakhstan, with trade of about 7.8 billion dollars in 2025, is

Türkiye's largest trading partner among OTS members. Kazakhstan is also one of the two countries that had not yet ratified the agreement as of June.

Until the agreement enters into force, Turkish companies cannot benefit from its common rules in any member state. The current stage of the ratification processes in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan may become clearer from statements made at the meetings in Ankara.

The transport agenda and the Middle Corridor

The summit's transport item is directly linked to the route that Türkiye's Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes as the "Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor". According to the ministry's description, the corridor starts in China and runs through Central Asia via Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan. After crossing the Caspian Sea, it reaches Türkiye via Azerbaijan and Georgia, and from there Europe. The ministry presents the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, which began operating on 30 October 2017, as an important completed section of the corridor.

Three full members and one observer of the OTS lie on this route: Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Türkiye and Turkmenistan. As an observer, Turkmenistan is not a party to the digital economy agreement. The agreement's provisions on paperless trade, logistics and e-invoicing also concern the documentation of goods carried along the corridor. The agreement's entry into force would therefore mean that common rules on documentation begin to apply to trade between the full members on the corridor.

What to watch

- The OTS Council of Foreign Ministers will meet in Ankara on 29 October.
- The chairmanship will pass to Türkiye at the leaders' meeting on 30 October. Whether the Ankara Declaration, which the leaders are expected to adopt, refers to the ratification of the digital economy agreement.
- If their ratification processes are not yet complete, the dates on which the parliaments of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan take up the ratification laws will be the first concrete indication of when the agreement may enter into force.

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