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ZANGEZUR CORRIDOR AND TÜRKİYE'S BALKAN IDENTITY: A BALKAN PERSPECTIVE ON EURASIAN CONNECTIVITY

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Corridor beyond trade

The Zangezur Corridor, often presented as a technical transport link, which is now The Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), in fact, is a key component of the broader Middle Corridor that connects Türkiye with the South Caucasus, the Caspian basin, and onward to Central Asia. Framed in this way, it is less a simple shortcut between points on a map than a strategic artery that reconfigures patterns of movement, influence, and interdependence across a wide geography. By anchoring new East □□□□□ and East □□□□□□ routes in and through Türkiye, the project carries implications that reach beyond the South Caucasus to encompass the Balkans as well. This commentary, therefore, approaches the Zangezur Corridor as a geopolitical undertaking whose ultimate significance lies in how it reshapes Türkiyes regional role and the Balkans' position within an emerging Eurasian connectivity architecture.[1]

Türkiyes evolving nodal role

Türkiyes emerging role as a nodal state is closely linked to the way new transport links reposition it at the crossroads of Eurasian connectivity. In this context, the Zangezur Corridor reinforces the Middle Corridor by providing a shorter, more direct land bridge between Türkiye, the South Caucasus, the Caspian basin, and Central Asia, while also easing Nakhchivans isolation and binding it more tightly to the wider Turkic geography. By expanding the web of east □□□□□ and north □□□□□□ routes that physically converge on Turkish territory, the project strengthens Türkiyes capacity to shape traffic flows, standards, and priorities. This fits AVİMs understanding of infrastructure diplomacy, in which control over critical routes supports Türkiyes strategic autonomy and enhances its political leverage and agenda-setting power in regional affairs.[2]

Why the Balkans matter in this picture

Building on Türkiyes evolving nodal role, the Zangezur Corridors wider significance

becomes apparent when viewed from the Balkans. As East □□□□□ and East □□□□□□ routes increasingly converge on and pass through Türkiye, Balkan countries gain the opportunity for more direct and diversified access to Central Asian and South Caucasian markets, bypassing traditional infrastructural and political bottlenecks farther north.[3]

In practical terms, this connectivity potential dovetails with Türkiyes deepening engagement in the region, as evidenced by expanding trade volumes, transport and energy projects, and discussions on Balkan peace and cooperation platforms. Such a configuration does not merely use the Balkans as a passageway for non □□□□□□□□ actors; it creates conditions for the Balkans themselves to move to the forefront as active beneficiaries and co-shapers of the emerging Eurasian connectivity architecture.[4]

Türkiyes Balkan identity and political change

Against this background, the Zangezur Corridor also intersects with the longer historical and cultural dimensions of Türkiyes presence in the Balkans. Türkiyes deep embeddedness in the region □ through Ottoman legacies, dense human mobility and contemporary political, economic and societal links □ means that connectivity projects radiating from Anatolia are not externally imposed networks, but extensions of an existing Balkan identity dimension in Turkish foreign policy.

When Balkan countries participate in a corridor □□□□□□□ Eurasian architecture anchored in Türkiye, they acquire an additional axis of diversification alongside the EU and traditional north □□□□□ routes, with potential benefits for their strategic autonomy. Politically, the resulting configuration can contribute to a re □□□□□□□□ of external influences in the region and encourage more inclusive, regionally owned platforms for dialogue, cooperation, and conflict management.[5]

Risks, sensitivities, and the need for inclusive design

Seen from this wider perspective, however, the Zangezur Corridor also concentrates a set of risks and sensitivities that cannot be ignored. Debates over sovereignty, security guarantees, and the relative weight of alternative or competing routes mean that Armenian, Russian, EU, and other regional actors view the project through different, sometimes conflicting, strategic lenses. From a Balkan perspective, this underscores the importance of avoiding a purely state-centric, exclusivist corridor model that sidelines local communities, economic stakeholders, and civil society □ a concern that echoes AVİMs broader criticism of overly centralized, state-controlled approaches in other policy domains. If the corridor is to fulfil its promise of reinforcing Türkiyes nodal role while bringing the Balkans to the forefront, it must rest on transparent, rules □□□□□ and genuinely multi □□□□□□□□□□ governance arrangements that turn connectivity into a shared opportunity rather than a new axis of fragmentation.[6]

**Picture: Caspian Post*

[1] How the Zangezur Corridor Reshapes Türkiyes Regional Role, Caspian Post, February 5, 2026, accessed March 12, 2026, https://caspianpost.com/analytics/how-the-zangezur-corridor-reshapes-turkiye-s-regional-role

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[5] Teoman Ertuğrul Tulun, Türkiye □□□□□□ Rapprochement and the Balkan Peace Platform: Testing Balancing Role, Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), No: 2026/14, February 24, 2026, accessed March 12, 2026, https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/Turkiye-Serbia-Rapprochement-and-the-Balkan-Peace-Platform-Testing-Balancing-Role

[6] 3 Questions Importance of Zangezur Corridor for the Region Explained, Anadolu Agency (AA), Ayşegül Ketenci, 21.12.2022, accessed March 12, 2026, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/3-questions-importance-of-zangezur-corridor-for-the-region-explained/2769019 ; Hazel Çağan Elbir , What Zangezur Corridor Promises: Trade, Transit and Trust Daily Sabah 19.09.2025, Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), September 19, 2025, accessed March 12, 2026, https://avim.org.tr/Blog/WHAT-ZANGEZUR-CORRIDOR-PROMISES-TRADE-TRANSIT-AND-TRUST-DAILY-SABAH-19-09-2025

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