



ASSEMBLY OF
TURKISH AMERICAN
ASSOCIATIONS

Issue 9
December 2025

Language, Culture, and Arts: The Bridge That Connects Us All.



SERVING
TURKISH
COMMUNITY
SINCE 1979

ATAA USA



Stronger together, for
a brighter tomorrow!

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"The press is the common voice of the nation."
"Everything in the world is the work of women."
"Oh, rising new generation, the future is yours. We founded the Republic; It is you who will take it forward and sustain it."
"Teachers, you will shape the minds of the new generation."
The Republic demands from you generations that are free in thought, free in conscience, and free in wisdom."



ASSEMBLY OF
TURKISH AMERICAN
ASSOCIATIONS

"Peace at Home, Peace on Earth"

K. Atatürk



ATAA
USA

Issue 09
December 2025

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Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) is established in 1979 to fight defamation and attacks on Turkish Americans. ATAA has evolved to be the most influential grassroots umbrella organization for the Turkish community in the United States and Canada.

We Stand Stronger as a United Community

SEPTEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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OCTOBER 2025

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NOVEMBER 2025

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DECEMBER 2025

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SEPTEMBER

COEDFO - Fundraising Picnic, Lake Texoma, 1-6pm (9/7)

OCTOBER

COEDFO - Jazz in the Garden Fundraising(10/11)

TACAWA - Turkfest, Seattle Center (10/11-12)

CTAA - Republic Ball (10/18)

TACAWA - Anatolia, Theater Shoreline Community College (10/19)

NOVEMBER

TURANT - Republic Ball (11/1)

TACAWA - Republic Day Celebration Columbia Tower (11/1)

COEDFO - Fundraising Lunch (11/9)

ATAA - Inspiring Change: Young Minds, Global Goals

TACAWA - Seattle Turkish Film Festival SIFF (11/21-23)

THANKSGIVING - (11/27)

DECEMBER

ATAA, TWLA, ETAC-USA - Turkish Language Day Celebrations, NY (12/4)

in recognition of UNESCO Turkish Language Family Day (Dec.15)

Turkish Coffee Day (12/5)

UNESCO Turkish Language Family Day (Dec.15)

Please share your events with us via:

magazine@ataa.org, president@ataa.org

ATAA COMMUNITY 2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

EVENTS

JANUARY 2026

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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JANUARY

ATAA Fundraising -Turkish Coffee, Tea, Pastries (1/10)

Location: Downtown McKinney (House of Motives)

Hosts: Alev Wieland

ATAA UN NEXTGEN Project - Intro to SDGs: People, Planet & Peace (1/11)

Location: [Webinar](#)

Hosts: Canan Özaktay, Didem Altop

ATAA Fundraising - Celebrating World Turkish Language Family Day -High Tea -Turkish Flavors & hospitality (1/18)

Location: The Plaza at Edgemere-Performing Art Center -8523 Thackery St, Dallas, TX 75225

Hosts: Alev Wieland

Buy Ticket or Donate Today: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/hi-tea-turkish-flavors-and-hospitality>

ATAA UN -NEXTGEN Project -Social Innovation: Theories of Change, Entrepreneurship & Mobilizing Stakeholders (2/8)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Canan Özaktay, Didem Altop

FEBRUARY 2026

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FEBRUARY

ATAA-UN- Legal Rights of Immigrants in the U.S. and the Challenges They Face (2/1)

Location: [Webinar](#)

ATAA UN -NEXTGEN Project -Social Innovation: Theories of Change, Entrepreneurship & Mobilizing Stakeholders (2/8)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Canan Özaktay, Didem Altop

ATAA Fundraising - Iftar (2/21)

Location: Another Time & Place Restaurant - 925 Abrams Rd, Richardson, TX 75081

Hosts: Alev Wieland

ATAA Commemorate Feb 21-Mother Language Day (Feb 22)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Alev Wieland, Berna Gürdal, Selim Erhan

MARCH 2026

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29	30	31				

MARCH

ATAA UN - NEXTGEN Project- Young Impact Leaders & Their Supporters (3/1)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Canan Özaktay, Didem Altop

ATAA Fundraising - Movie Night (3/22)

Location: TBD

Hosts: Alev Wieland

Please share your events with us via:

magazine@ataa.org, president@ataa.org



ATAA COMMUNITY 2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

EVENTS

APRIL 2026

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
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APRIL

ATAA UN - to Commemorate April's 24th Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace (4/5)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Selim Erhan, Yücel Burdurlu

ATAA UN - NEXTGEN Project-Decade of Water: Global Lessons & Local Action (4/12)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Canan Özakay, Didem Altop

ATAA Fundraising - Turkish Nights Dinner & Dance (4/18)

Location: Turkish Cafe & Lounge- 5760 Legacy Dr. Plano Texas 75024

Hosts: Alev Wieland

MAY 2026

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31						

MAY

ATAA Conference and General Assembly Meeting (May 1,2,3)

Location: The Westin Dallas Stonebriar Golf Resort & Spa - 1549 Legacy Dr, Frisco, TX 75034

Hosts: ATAA

ATAA UN - to Commemorate May 21 Worlds Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (5/17)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Selim Erhan, Yücel Burdurlu

OCTOBER 2026

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
				1	2	3
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OCTOBER

103rd Republic Day Celebrations

Location: All ATAA Locations

Host: ATAA Component Organization Leader

NOVEMBER 2026

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30					

NOVEMBER

ATAA UN - to Commemorate November 21 World Science Day for Peace and Development (11/8)

Location: Webinar

Hosts: Selim Erhan, Yücel Burdurlu

DECEMBER 2026

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

DECEMBER

Turkish Coffee Day (Dec 5)

Location: All ATAA Locations

Host: ATAA Component Organization Leaders

World Turkish Language Family Day (Dec 15)

Location: All ATAA Locations

Host: ATAA Component Organization Leaders

Let's Celebrate



Please share your events with us via:

magazine@ataa.org, president@ataa.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Alev Wieland
ATAA President
president@ataa.org

Stronger together, for
a brighter tomorrow!

Dear Members of the Turkish American Community,

As we close another meaningful year, I extend my sincere gratitude to each of you for your dedication and steadfast support of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA). Your commitment strengthens our mission and keeps our shared legacy vibrant.

Our vision remains clear: to unite Turkish Americans, celebrate our heritage, bridge cultures, and empower future generations to lead with pride and purpose. Guided by this vision, our mission continues to focus on strengthening our community nationwide, promoting understanding between Türkiye and the United States, and ensuring that our cultural voice is heard, respected, and carried forward with confidence.

This year, we advanced these goals together. One of the most significant achievements for the Turkish people across the globe was UNESCO's approval of December 15 as the World Turkic Language Family Day—a milestone that crowns decades of cultural heritage work and also reflects the impact of ATAA's UN-based programs. Your engagement and encouragement helped make this recognition possible, and it stands as a proud moment for our entire community and Turkish people around the globe.

Working alongside our UN partners—Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA), Empowering the Turkish American Community (ETAC-USA), and Light Millennium (LM), Bridge to Türkiye Fun (BTF), Turkish Philosophy Funds (TPF), Academicians—we expanded our presence on the global stage, ensuring Turkish American perspectives continue to contribute meaningfully to international cultural, educational and environmental dialogue.

Throughout the year, ATAA advanced its mission through a series of meaningful accomplishments:

UN Initiatives:

Strengthened participation within the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC) framework, elevating issues of cultural heritage, education, environmental and community engagement through well-received programs and collaborations globally.

Advocacy Work:

Continued outreach with policymakers and partner organizations to ensure Turkish American perspectives are accurately represented and understood. Provided education and support so community's rights are not violated.

Community Outreach:

Supported local associations and community groups through joint events, humanitarian initiatives, and nationwide partnerships that reinforced unity and cooperation.

Youth Programs:

We delivered leadership, education, and cultural programs that empowered our youth to engage, learn, and lead with confidence. Their enthusiasm and strong connection to their heritage reassure us that our community's future will remain bright, capable, and united.

Conferences & Conventions:

Organized gatherings that inspired discussion, collaboration, and strategic planning—laying a strong foundation for our 2026 Annual Convention.

Educational Programs:

Offered seminars, panels, and workshops focused on culture, diplomacy, history, and global citizenship, strengthening the knowledge base of our community.

Cultural Events:

Held national programs celebrating Turkish and Turkic culture, language, arts, and history, helping connect communities across generations and across the country.

ATAA's strength comes from the unity and dedication of its individual and Component member associations, volunteers, donors, and supporters. As the umbrella organization representing Turkish American communities nationwide, ATAA plays a vital role in bringing our communities together under one mission—protecting our shared values, amplifying our voice, and ensuring our cultural and civic presence remains strong. Your teamwork, passion, and generosity are what make this unification real and every achievement possible.

As we look ahead, I warmly invite you to join us at the 2026 ATAA Annual Convention in the Dallas, Texas area—a special gathering where we will celebrate our progress and set new goals for the years ahead.

Wishing you and your families a healthy, peaceful, and inspiring New Year. Together, we will continue to honor our heritage, expand our impact, and support the next generation of leaders.

With warm regards,

Alev Wieland
ATAA President



**MAY 1-2
2026**

THE WESTIN DALLAS STONEBRIAR
GOLF RESORT & SPA
1549 LEGACY DRIVE,
FRISCO, TX, 75034



ATAA 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



ASSEMBLY OF
TURKISH AMERICAN
ASSOCIATIONS



STAY TUNED! DETAILS @
WWW.ATAA.ORG

SECURE YOUR ROOM @
BOOK.PASSKEY.COM/E/51113025





Dr. Selim Erhan
ATAA USA Editor

Dear friends,

Power is a general term that relates to the ability and capacity to do something. Power comes in many forms. One form is the ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events. Our thoughts and intentions can make a difference in events and other people's lives. To convey these thoughts, we rely on our language skills.

There are certain things that are expected from us, such as being truthful, honest, hardworking and compassionate. There are also expectations from an educated person, such as speaking politely, eating politely and conveying knowledge that are useful to others. Thus, the better we speak, the better people will understand us and respect our knowledge and ideas. We all admire lawyers, politicians, teachers, and actors whose profession is to master the language they speak. We admire the clarity, the precise choice of words, the effectiveness of the delivery of their messages. But don't the rest of us also need to convey our stories, our findings, our thoughts?

Speaking well does not come naturally to most people. Therefore, it is something most of us must learn. Learning is a process of dedicating our minds and time to study until the target goal is reached. Then we need to maintain it with further efforts.

Today we live in a world where people are frequently traveling, communicating and marrying others from different cultures and languages. These interactions enrich our views and if we take advantage of them, make us much better people.

People living outside the countries of their mother tongues have an especially important role as they can convey the valuable leanings of one culture to another. This improves understanding, appreciation, and respect, which leads to a desire to deepen relationships that enrich both sides.

Power of Turks

Therefore, the better we speak, the better we represent the rich history and lifestyles of our people and the better we can transfer knowledge from other cultures back home to make the world a better place for all.

Although English is emerging as a universal language it cannot capture the non-English speaking cultures nuances. Thus, speaking a native language will always have superior benefits such as making us feel part of a whole, giving us a sense of warmth knowing there are many others like us that enjoy the same passions, the same humor and help us be accepted into that culture.

As Turkish Americans we also have the ability to connect to other Turkic countries. In recent years these countries are moving closer to each other through business and shared culture that is increasing the support for each other.

We don't know what the future holds. But in an increasingly connected world we surely will need all the skills we acquire. Make speaking well a part of it. When the time comes to express yourself, you will be valued and respected.



Let's work together, grow together, and continue building a vibrant, connected, and resilient Turkish American community.



Dr. Selim Erhan
ATAA USA Editor

Do You Know the Power of ATAA? Are You Using It?

ATAA represents a network which you can access. It is like a telephone. With a telephone you receive calls, you can receive information but more than that, you can make calls and connect to others. You can find information and send information. Thus, a telephone connects you to others in many ways. Being able to access the ATAA network enables you to also be an emitter not only a receiver. Gives you a power to reach out across the US and Canada and even to Türkiye with selected projects.



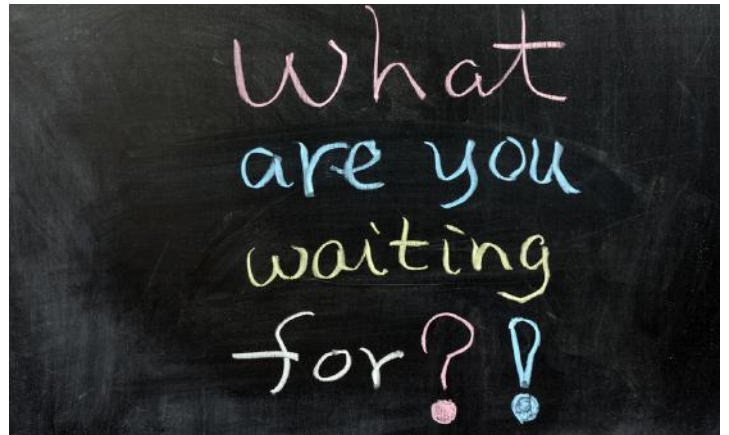
Do your spouses want to improve their Turkish? Does your child need professional Turkish language skills? Do you want to get involved with helping a teenager in Türkiye to speak better English? Do you want to help with the education of young girls in Türkiye? Do you want to help young girls in universities to acquire self-confidence and learn professional leadership skills from executives? Do you want your child to get involved with United Nations Sustainability Goals projects that will be valuable additions to their applications and resumes no matter which subject they chose?

Arts and social events bring people together with a universal language. We can and should create such environments and bring our friends and loved ones together on every possible occasion. Here ATAA network can make such events much easier when you connect to groups that have engaged in similar activities. You can get support and guidance to prepare festivals, concerts, conferences and even small gatherings.



ATAA brings meaningful, lasting value to the community by creating opportunities that strengthen cultural ties, empower youth, and support education on both sides of the ocean. Whether helping spouses improve their Turkish, guiding children toward professional language skills, or offering volunteers a chance to mentor teens in Türkiye in English, ATAA fosters cross-cultural learning and personal growth. Through its programs that support the education of young girls, build leadership skills for university students, and engage children in United Nations Sustainability Goals projects, the organization equips individuals with confidence, global awareness, and experiences that enrich their academic and professional futures.

Once you are part of the ATAA's network we are sure you will find it rewarding, educational and invigorating!





Independence of the Turkish Cities

Aegean Region

İzmir – 9 September 1922
Aydın – 7 September 1922
Manisa – 8 September 1922
Uşak – 1 September 1922
Afyonkarahisar – 27 August 1922
Kütahya – 30 August 1922
Denizli – 4 September 1922
Muğla – 5 July 1921

Marmara Region

Balıkesir – 6 September 1922
Bursa – 11 September 1922
Bilecik – 6 September 1922
Kocaeli (İzmit) – 28 June 1921
Edirne – 25 November 1922
Tekirdağ – 13 November 1922
Çanakkale – 24 September 1922

Central Anatolia Region

Eskişehir – 2 September 1922
Ankara – 27 December 1920
(became the de facto center with Atatürk's arrival)
Konya – 30 August 1922
Kayseri – 21 June 1921

Mediterranean Region

Adana – 5 January 1922
Mersin – 3 January 1922
Antalya – 9 July 1921
Isparta – 26 June 1922
Burdur – 6 July 1921

Black Sea Region

Samsun – 9 June 1919
(beginning of the War of Independence)
Trabzon – 24 February 1918
(liberation from Russian occupation)
Rize – 2 March 1918
Giresun – 12 February 1918
Ordu – 20 February 1918

Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Region

Erzurum – 12 March 1918
Kars – 30 October 1920
Ardahan – 23 February 1921
Van – 2 April 1918
Bitlis – 10 August 1916
Diyarbakır – 9 March 1918
Gaziantep – 25 December 1921
Şanlıurfa – 11 April 1920
Maraş (Kahramanmaraş) – 12 February 1920



Ekselansları Büyükelçi Ahmet Yıldız
Türkiye'nin Birleşmiş Milletler
Daimî Temsilcisi

Dil Kültürün Taşıyıcısıdır

UNESCO'nun 15 Aralık'ı Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü ilan etmesinin ardından, New York Türk Evi'nde Türk Amerikan Dernekleri Kurumu (ATAA), Amerika Türk Kadınlar Birliği (TWLA) ve Türk Amerikan Toplumunu Güçlendirme Derneği (ETAC-USA) tarafından düzenlenen "Dil Kültürel Kimliği Taşır" başlıklı ilk kutlama etkinliğinde, Sayın Büyükelçi Ahmet Yıldız diplomatik bir konuşma yaptı. Aşağıda söz konusu diplomatik konuşma yer almaktadır:

Saygıdeğer Büyükelçiler, Değerli Akademisyenler, Türk Dünyasının kıymetli temsilcileri,

UNESCO tarafından ilan edilen 15 Aralık Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü'nü kutlamak üzere, Türk dernekleri tarafından düzenlenen bu etkinlik vesilesiyle, Türk dünyasının çeşitli yerlerinden gelen kardeşlerimizle buluşmaktan memnuniyet duyuyorum.

Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Özbekistan'ın birlikte UNESCO'ya sunduğu, 3 Kasım'da kabul edilen kararla 15 Aralık günü "Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü" ilan edilmiştir.

Dil ailemizi yaşatmak, kutlamak ve tanıtmak amacıyla birleşen tüm Türk devletlerine şükranlarımızı sunuyorum.

Diller, iletişim aracı olmalarının yanı sıra, medeniyetlerin ruhunu, kuşaklar boyunca kolektif hafızayı, bilgeliği ve kimliği taşırlar.

200 milyondan fazla insan tarafından geniş bir coğrafyada konuşulan Türk dili ailesi de ortak tarih ve değerlerimizle yüzyıllar boyunca dokunmuş bugün burada küçük bir parçasını göreceğimiz zengin bir kültürel mozaik temsil eder.



15 Aralık tarihi ise, 8. yüzyıla uzanan ve Türk dilindeki en eski yazılı belgelerden biri olan Orhun Yazıtlarının çözülmesini simgeler.

Dolayısıyla, Türk uygarlıklarının ortak tarihinin kudretli bir timsali olan 15 Aralık günü, bundan sonra halklarımız arasında kardeşliği, kültürel paydayı ve diyalogu teşvik eden tarihi bir gün olacaktır.

Bu günün, Türk dilinin ortak kültürel ve sanatsal zenginliklerini korunmasına ilişkin ortak çabaları daha da güçlendirmenin yanı sıra, Türk Dünyası'nın barış ve diyaloga dayalı müşterek vizyonunu da dünyaya tanıttığına inanıyorum.

Bu bakımdan 15 Aralık Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü günü, Birleşmiş Milletler'in dayandığı barış ve diyalog kavramlarının yaşatılmasına da katkı sağlayacaktır.

Bu anlayışla, Türk Dünyası içinde Birleşmiş Milletlerle benzer amaçları taşıyan Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı ile BM arasındaki bağların önümüzdeki dönemde güçlendirilmesi için çalışmalarımızı sürdüreceğiz.

Bu vesileyle, Türk Dili Ailesinin, Türk dünyası ile ötesinde diyalogu güçlendirmeye hizmet etmesini diliyor, hepinizi saygıyla selamlıyorum.



H.E. Mr. Ahmet Yıldız
Permanent Representative of
Türkiye to the United Nations

H.E. Ahmet Yıldız delivered diplomatic address during the first celebratory event “Language Carries Cultural Identity” organized by The Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), the Turkish Women’s League of America (TWLA), and Empowering the Turkish American Community (ETAC-USA) after UNESCO’s declaration of December 15-World Turkic Language Family Day, at NY Turkish House. Below is the diplomatic address:

Distinguished Ambassadors, Esteemed Academics, Valued Representatives of the Turkic World,

I am pleased to come together with our brothers and sisters from various parts of the Turkic world on the occasion of this event organized by Turkic associations to celebrate 15 December, World Turkic Language Family Day, as proclaimed by UNESCO.

With the joint submission of Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, and following the decision adopted on 3 November, 15 December has been officially designated as World Turkic Language Family Day.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all Turkic states that have united to preserve, celebrate, and promote our shared language family.

Languages are not merely tools of communication; they carry the spirit of civilizations, collective memory across generations, wisdom, and identity.

Spoken by more than 200 million people across a vast geography, the Turkic language family represents a rich cultural mosaic, woven over centuries through our shared history and values—of which we witness a small reflection here today.

The date 15 December also symbolizes the decipherment of the Orkhon Inscriptions, one of the earliest written records of the Turkic language, dating back to the 8th century.

Language Carries Cultural Identity



Thus, as a powerful symbol of the shared history of Turkic civilizations, 15 December will henceforth stand as a historic day that promotes fraternity, cultural common ground, and dialogue among our peoples.

I believe that this day will not only strengthen our collective efforts to safeguard the shared cultural and artistic richness of the Turkic language, but also introduce to the world the Turkic World’s shared vision founded on peace and dialogue.

In this respect, World Turkic Language Family Day will also contribute to the preservation of the principles of peace and dialogue upon which the United Nations is built.

With this understanding, we will continue our efforts in the coming period to strengthen ties between the United Nations and the Organization of Turkic States, which shares similar objectives within the Turkic World.

On this occasion, I wish that the Turkic Language Family will serve to strengthen dialogue within the Turkic world and beyond, and I extend my respectful greetings to everyone.



Watch - Morning Coffee with Bircan Bali (Bircan Bali ile Sabah Kahvesi) Program Reportaj.



Prof. Dr. M. Öcal Oğuz

UNESCO Türkiye Millî Komisyonu Başkanı

Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü:

UNESCO İlan Süreci

Kısa adı UNESCO olan Birleşmiş Milletler Eğitim, Bilim ve Kültür Kurumu, 30 Ekim-13 Kasım 2025 tarihleri arasında Özbekistan'ın köklü medeniyetler şehri Semerkant'ta gerçekleştirilen 43. Genel Konferansı'nda 15 Aralık gününü "Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü" olarak ilan eden kararı kabul etmiştir. Bu karar, Türk dili ailesinin korunması, gelecek kuşaklara aktarılması, uluslararası düzeyde görünürlüğünün artırılması ve bu dil ailesinin ortaya koyduğu medeniyetin insanlığın daha etkin bir şekilde farkına varması ve yararlanması yönünde önemli bir adım olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

UNESCO, dilleri de içine alan eğitim, bilim, kültür ve iletişim sektörlerinde yaptığı çalışmalarla dilleri yalnızca iletişim aracı değil, aynı zamanda kültürel kimlik ve hafızanın taşıyıcısı ve sürdürülebilir kalkınmanın lokomotifleri olan kültürün temeli olarak görmektedir. Nitekim UNESCO'nun öncülüğünde hayata geçirilen "Kaybolmakta Olan Diller Atlası", bu programı da içine alacak şekilde peşinden oluşturulan "Yaşayan Diller Atlası" ve "Siber Âlemden Çok Dillilik" gibi çalışmalarının yanında 2003 tarihli Somut Olmayan Kültürel Mirasın Korunması Sözleşmesi'yle "somut olmayan kültürel mirasın aktarılmasında taşıyıcı işlevi gören, dili içeren sözlü gelenekler ve anlatımlar" ifadesiyle dilin kültürel miras aktarımındaki rolünü vurgulamakta ve kültürlerin korunmasının dillerin korunmasıyla mümkün olabileceğini vurgulamaktadır. Benzer şekilde UNESCO'nun 2005 tarihli Kültürel İfadelerin Çeşitliliğinin Korunması ve Geliştirilmesi Sözleşmesi de dilin kültürel ifadelerin çeşitliliğini ve kültür endüstrisini besleyen en temel kaynaklardan biri olduğunu belirtmekte; bu sözleşme "dil çeşitliliğinin, kültürel anlatım çeşitliliğinin temel bir unsuru" olduğunu hatırlatarak bu çeşitliliğin desteklenmesini taraf devletlerin vazgeçilmez sorumluluğu olarak görmektedir. UNESCO kararları ve uygulamaları, dilsel çeşitliliğin korunması konusunda uluslararası bir taahhüt ortaya koymakta; zira diller, kimlik inşası, iletişim, sosyal uyum, eğitim ve sürdürülebilir kalkınma gibi boyutlarıyla hem yerel toplumlar hem de uluslararası toplum için hayati önemdedir. Bu yaklaşımla UNESCO Kuruluş Sözleşmesinde yer alan "kültürlerin verimli diyalogu" ideali doğrultusunda, yerelden uluslararasına uzanan bir genişlikte dil çeşitliliğinin korunup teşvik edilmesi her zaman kurumun öncelikleri arasında yer almıştır.

UNESCO, kendi yetki ve sorumluluk alanına giren konularda farkındalık yaratmak için belirli günleri "uluslararası gün" ilan ederek küresel ölçekte kutlanmalarını teşvik etmektedir. Dil çeşitliliğini görünür kılmak amacıyla bugüne dek birçok dillere özgü özel günler belirlenmiştir.

Örneğin UNESCO, 21 Şubat'ı "Uluslararası Anadil Günü" yanı sıra, 18 Aralık'ı "Dünya Arap Dili Günü", 20 Mart'ı "Uluslararası Fransızca Konuşanlar Günü", 5 Mayıs'ı "Dünya Portekizce Günü", 5 Kasım'ı "Dünya Roman Dili Günü", 7 Temmuz'u "Dünya Kiswahili Dili Günü", 25 Eylül'ü "Soninke Günü" ve 43. Genel Konferansta "Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü" ile birlikte 9 Şubat'ı "Dünya Yunan Dili Günü" olarak ilan etmiştir. Bu tür gün ilanları, ilgili dil ve kültürlerin küresel düzeyde tanınırlığını artırmayı ve dilsel-kültürel çeşitliliğe dair farkındalık oluşturmaya amaçlamaktadır.

Türk dili, yalnızca geniş bir coğrafyada milyonlarca insanın günlük iletişim aracı olmakla kalmayıp binlerce yıllık ortak hafıza ve kültürel birikimin de taşıyıcısı konumundadır. Türk dili kökleri binlerce yıllık derinliklerde olan büyük bir medeniyet ve kültürün duygu ve düşünce birikim ve kazanımlarını asırlar boyunca nesilden nesile aktarmaktadır. Bu engin bilimsel, edebî ve kültürel miras, Türk dünyasında ortak motifler ve değerler etrafında kültürel yakınlaşmaya ve bütünleşmeye zemin oluştururken insanlığın bilim ve medeniyet ufkunun gelişmesine de katkı sunmaktadır.

Coğrafi açıdan bakıldığında Türk dili, Sibirya'dan Basra Körfezi'ne, Türkistan'dan Balkanlara uzanan geniş bir bölgede "ana dili" olarak konuşulmaktadır. Bu geniş coğrafyada Türk diline mensup toplulukların kimlik, bellek ve kültürel süreklilik ve ortaklıklarını dilleri sayesinde sağladıkları görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla Türk dili, birbirinden farklı coğrafyalardaki toplumları kültürel bir ortak paydada buluşturan, kültürlerarası yakınlaşmayı ve ortak aidiyet hissini pekiştiren güçlü bir araç konumundadır. Bu yönüyle Türk dili, sadece geçmişin bir mirası değil, aynı zamanda günümüzde ve gelecekte çok yönlü uluslararası iş birliğine zemin oluşturan canlı bir kültürel bağdır. UNESCO'nun 3 Kasım 2025'te Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü ilanı kararı da bu zengin mirasın uluslararası düzeyde tanınması ve Türk dilinin bütün renk, çeşitlilik ve zenginliğiyle korunup gelecek kuşaklara aktarılması yönünde atılmış önemli bir adım olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

Türk Dilinin yukarıda vurgulanan önemine binaen, UNESCO çatısı altında bir uluslararası gün ilan edilmesi fikri ilk kez 2017 yılında UNESCO Türkiye Millî Komisyonunda gündeme gelmiş, kısa adı TÜRKSOY olan Uluslararası Türk Kültürü Teşkilatı Üyesi Ülkelerin UNESCO Millî Komisyonlarıyla yürütülen yıllık toplantılarda zemin bulan iş birliği fikri, sürece ivme kazandırmıştır.



Nitekim UNESCO Türkiye Millî Komisyonunun ev sahipliğinde yapılan istişari toplantıları Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan ve Türkmenistan'ın ilgili kurumlarının katkı ve katılımlarıyla gerçekleştirmiş; 9 Mart 2018, 10 Şubat 2021 ve 4 Haziran 2021 tarihlerinde bir araya gelen UNESCO Millî Komisyon temsilcileri ve ilgili Bakanlıkların ve kurumların temsilcileri ve uzmanlar, UNESCO'ya sunulacak karar tasarısının teknik ayrıntılarını değerlendirmiştir. Sürece TÜRKSOY ve Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı üyesi Türk Cumhuriyetlerinin UNESCO Millî Komisyonları yanında, ilgili bakanlıklar, kurumlar ve sivil toplum kuruluşları da aktif katkı sunmuştur. Yapılan çok yönlü istişareler sonucunda, Türk dilinin tarihi, edebî değerini, bilim yönüyle önemini ve tarihî geçmişini en iyi şekilde anlatabilmek açısından Göktürk Yazıtlarıyla ilgili bir günün belirlenmesinde mutabakat sağlanmıştır. Mevsimsel ve takvimsel uygunluk yanında bilime verilen değer, kültürlerin yakınlaşmasına verilen önem kapsamında 15 Aralık oy birliğiyle uygun bulunmuştur. Bilindiği üzere bu tarih, Danimarkalı dil bilimci Vilhelm Thomsen'in 1893 yılında Orhun Yazıtlarını çözdüğünü, yazıtların Türk dilinde olduğunu bilim dünyasına duyurduğu güne tekabül etmektedir. Ortaya çıkan ortak irade neticesinde hazırlanan karar taslağında, 15 Aralık'ın "Dünya Türk Dili Günü" olarak UNESCO tarafından tanınması talebi yer almıştır.

Türk dili günü girişimi, Türk devlet başkanlarının üst düzeydeki siyasi desteğini de alarak güçlenmiştir. Nitekim 3 Eylül 2018'de Kırgızistan'ın Çolpan-Ata şehrinde toplanan Türk Konseyi (değişen yapısı ve adıyla günümüzde kısa adı TDT olan Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı) 6. Zirvesinin sonuç bildirisinde, üye ülke liderleri UNESCO tarafından "Dünya Türk Dili Günü" ilan edilmesi fikrini memnuniyetle karşıladıklarını beyan ederek ilgili çalışmalara daha fazla odaklanma çağrısında bulunmuştur. Bunu takiben 15 Ekim 2019'da Bakü'de gerçekleştirilen 7. Zirve kararları arasında, TDT Sekretaryasına Üye Ülkelerin UNESCO Millî Komisyonları ve diğer Türk İşbirliği Teşkilatları arasında koordinasyon sağlanarak bu günün UNESCO tarafından ilan edilmesi için çalışma yürütülmesi görevi verilmiştir. 16 Mart 2023 tarihinde Ankara'da gerçekleştirilen Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Olağanüstü Zirvesi Bildirisinde "UNESCO tarafından bir Dünya Türk Dili Günü ilan edilmesine yönelik tam taahhütlerini teyit ettikleri" maddesi yine bildiri de de yer almıştır. Ekim 2025 tarihinde Azerbaycan'da gerçekleştirilen Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Devlet Başkanları Konseyi 12. Zirvesinde "15 Aralık'ın "Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü" ilan edilmesine ilişkin karar taslağının 30 Ekim-13 Kasım 2025 tarihlerinde Semerkant'ta düzenlenecek olan 43. UNESCO Genel Konferansı'nda görüşülmek üzere 222. UNESCO Yürütme Kurulu gündemine ortaklaşa sunulmasını takdirle karşıladıkları" maddesine yer verilmiştir.



Bu üst düzey siyasi irade beyanları, Türk Dünyası genelinde ortak bir hedefin benimsenmiş olması bakımından kıymetli olup UNESCO nezdindeki diplomatik girişimler için yol açısı olmuştur. Bütün bu çaba, çalışma ve süreçlerin sonunda TDT üyesi ülkelerin UNESCO Millî Komisyonlarının katkısıyla bir açıklama notu ve karar taslağı hazırlanarak UNESCO Genel Konferansı'na sunulmak üzere yoğun müzakerelerle oluşturulmuştur.

"Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü" için 15 Aralık tarihinin seçilmesi, Türk dili tarihine vakıf çevrelerce de oldukça anlamlı bulunmuştur. Orhun Yazıtları, Türk dilinin bilinen en eski yazılı kaynakları olarak kabul edilmektedir. Danimarkalı ünlü Türkolog Vilhelm Thomsen, 15 Aralık 1893'te yaptığı açıklamayla bu Orhun Kitabelerinin Göktürk alfabesiyle yazılmış bir Türk dili metni olduğunu tüm dünyaya ilan etmiştir. Böylece ilk defa çözümlenen Orhun Yazıtları aracılığıyla Türk dilinin yaklaşık 1300 yıllık yazılı geçmişi kanıtlanmış ve bilim dünyasına sunulmuştur. UNESCO'nun da "Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü" olarak kabul ve ilan ettiği bu günün Türk dili açısından uluslararası, kültürlerarası, evrensel ve sembolik anlamları yanında bilimsel uluslararası bilim yönü de vurgulanmış olmaktadır. Böylece bir yandan Türk dilinin bütün renk, biçim ve zenginlikleriyle korunması ve gelecek nesillere aktarılması yönündeki çabalara uluslararası bir destek sağlanırken diğer yandan insanlığın kültürel ve dilsel çeşitliliğin zenginleşmesine katkıda bulunmaktadır. Dillerin kültürel çeşitliliğin korunması ve kültürlerin yakınlaşması ideallerinin gerçekleştirilmesine sağladığı katkı yanında, eğitim ve sürdürülebilir kalkınma için oynadığı hayati rolü de unutmamak gerekir. Bu yönüyle "Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü", Türk dünyasının bugünkü ve gelecekteki ortaklıklarının pekiştirilmesi ve her alanda iş birliğinin güçlendirilmesine önemli destekler sağlayacaktır.

Unutulmamalıdır ki dil aracılığıyla oluşturulan, yaşatılan ve geleceğe aktarılması gereken eğitimsel, bilimsel veya kültürel miraslar, o dil ailesinin olduğu kadar bütün insanlığın ortak mirası ve sürdürülebilir kalkınma amaçlarına ulaşmak için yararlanabileceği çok değerli bir hazinedir.

Bütün bu duygu ve düşünceler içinde son söz olarak diyorum ki "Dünya Türk Dili Ailesi Günü" kutlu olsun; bütün insanlığa hayırlı olsun!



World Turkic Language Family Day: The UNESCO Proclamation Process

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By its short name UNESCO, adopted at its 43rd General Conference—held between 30 October and 13 November 2025 in Samarkand, the ancient city of civilizations in Uzbekistan—the decision proclaiming 15 December as “World Turkic Language Family Day.” This decision is regarded as an important step toward the protection of the Turkic language family, its transmission to future generations, increasing its visibility at the international level, and enabling humanity to more effectively recognize and benefit from the civilization expressed through this language family.

Through its work in education, science, culture, and communication—including languages—UNESCO views languages not merely as tools of communication, but as carriers of cultural identity and memory, and as the foundation of culture, which is the driving force of sustainable development. Indeed, alongside initiatives such as the Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger, the subsequently developed Atlas of Living Languages, and Multilingualism in Cyberspace, UNESCO emphasizes the role of language in cultural transmission through the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which refers to “oral traditions and expressions, including language, as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage.” This underlines that the protection of cultures is only possible through the protection of languages. Similarly, UNESCO’s 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions identifies language as one of the fundamental sources that nourish the diversity of cultural expressions and the cultural industries, reminding that “linguistic diversity is a fundamental element of cultural diversity” and considering the support of this diversity an indispensable responsibility of States Parties. UNESCO’s decisions and practices thus constitute an international commitment to safeguarding linguistic diversity, as languages are vital for identity construction, communication, social cohesion, education, and sustainable development at both local and international levels. In line with the ideal of the “fruitful dialogue of cultures” enshrined in UNESCO’s Constitution, the protection and promotion of linguistic diversity from the local to the international level has always been among the Organization’s priorities.

To raise awareness in areas within its mandate, UNESCO encourages global celebrations by proclaiming certain dates as “international days.” To make linguistic diversity visible, many language-specific days have been designated to date. For example, UNESCO has proclaimed 21 February as International Mother Language Day; 18 December as World Arabic Language Day; 20 March as International Day of La Francophonie; 5 May as World Portuguese Language Day;

5 November as World Romani Language Day; 7 July as World Kiswahili Language Day; 25 September as Soninke Day; and, at the 43rd General Conference, in addition to World Turkic Language Family Day, 9 February as World Greek Language Day. Such proclamations aim to increase the global recognition of the respective languages and cultures and to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity.

The Turkic language is not only the daily means of communication for millions of people across a vast geography, but also the bearer of a shared memory and cultural accumulation spanning thousands of years. Rooted in millennia of history, the Turkic language has transmitted the emotional and intellectual heritage of a great civilization and culture from generation to generation over centuries. This immense scientific, literary, and cultural heritage fosters cultural rapprochement and integration around shared motifs and values within the Turkic world, while also contributing to the advancement of humanity’s scientific and civilizational horizons.

Geographically, the Turkic language is spoken as a mother tongue across a wide region extending from Siberia to the Persian Gulf, and from Turkestan to the Balkans. In this vast area, communities belonging to the Turkic language family maintain their identity, memory, cultural continuity, and shared heritage through their language. Thus, the Turkic language serves as a powerful instrument that brings together societies in different geographies around a common cultural denominator, strengthening intercultural rapprochement and a shared sense of belonging. In this respect, the Turkic language is not only a legacy of the past, but also a living cultural bond that provides a foundation for multifaceted international cooperation today and in the future. UNESCO’s decision of 3 November 2025 to proclaim World Turkic Language Family Day should therefore be regarded as an important step toward the international recognition of this rich heritage and the protection and transmission of the Turkic language—with all its colors, diversity, and richness—to future generations.

In light of the importance of the Turkic language emphasized above, the idea of proclaiming an international day under UNESCO was first raised in 2017 within the UNESCO National Commission of Türkiye. Cooperation developed during the annual meetings held with the UNESCO National Commissions of the member states of the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSOY) gave momentum to the process. Consultative meetings hosted by the UNESCO National Commission of Türkiye were held with the participation and contributions of the relevant institutions of Türkiye,



Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Representatives of UNESCO National Commissions, relevant ministries, institutions, and experts who met on 9 March 2018, 10 February 2021, and 4 June 2021 reviewed the technical details of the draft decision to be submitted to UNESCO. In addition to the UNESCO National Commissions of the Turkic republics that are members of TÜRKSÖY and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), relevant ministries, institutions, and civil society organizations actively contributed to the process. As a result of extensive consultations, consensus was reached on selecting a day associated with the Göktürk Inscriptions as the most appropriate way to convey the historical, literary, scientific, and cultural significance of the Turkic language. Considering seasonal and calendrical suitability, as well as the value placed on science and intercultural rapprochement, 15 December was unanimously deemed appropriate. This date corresponds to the day in 1893 when the Danish linguist Vilhelm Thomsen announced to the scholarly world that he had deciphered the Orkhon Inscriptions and that they were written in the Turkic language. Accordingly, the draft decision prepared upon this shared will requested UNESCO's recognition of 15 December as World Turkic Language Day.

The initiative gained further strength through high-level political support from Turkic heads of state. In the final declaration of the 6th Summit of the Turkic Council (now the Organization of Turkic States, OTS), held on 3 September 2018 in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, member state leaders welcomed the idea of proclaiming World Turkic Language Day by UNESCO and called for greater focus on related efforts. Subsequently, among the decisions of the 7th Summit held in Baku on 15 October 2019, the OTS Secretariat was tasked with coordinating among the UNESCO National Commissions of member states and other Turkic cooperation organizations to work toward UNESCO's proclamation of this day. The declaration of the Extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Turkic States held in Ankara on 16 March 2023 reaffirmed the members' full commitment to the proclamation of a World Turkic Language Day by UNESCO. At the 12th Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States, held in Azerbaijan in October 2025, appreciation was expressed for the joint submission of the draft decision to proclaim 15 December as World Turkic Language Family Day to the agenda of the 222nd UNESCO Executive Board, for consideration at the 43rd UNESCO General Conference in Samarkand from 30 October to 13 November 2025.

These high-level political declarations are valuable in demonstrating the adoption of a common goal across the Turkic world and have paved the way for diplomatic initiatives at UNESCO. As a result of all these efforts and processes, an explanatory note and draft decision were prepared with the contributions of the UNESCO National Commissions of OTS member states and, following intensive negotiations, submitted to the UNESCO General Conference.



The selection of 15 December for World Turkic Language Family Day has also been considered highly meaningful by circles well versed in the history of the Turkic language. The Orkhon Inscriptions are accepted as the oldest known written sources of the Turkic language. With his announcement on 15 December 1893, the renowned Danish Turkologist Vilhelm Thomsen declared to the world that these inscriptions were texts written in the Turkic language using the Göktürk alphabet. Through the first-ever decipherment of the Orkhon Inscriptions, the approximately 1,300-year written history of the Turkic language was proven and presented to the scholarly community. By recognizing and proclaiming this day as World Turkic Language Family Day, UNESCO emphasizes not only the international, intercultural, universal, and symbolic significance of the Turkic language, but also its scientific dimension. Thus, while providing international support for efforts to protect and transmit the Turkic language—with all its colors, forms, and richness—to future generations, it also contributes to the enrichment of humanity's cultural and linguistic diversity. Alongside the role of languages in safeguarding cultural diversity and promoting intercultural dialogue, their vital role in education and sustainable development must also be remembered. In this respect, World Turkic Language Family Day will provide significant support for strengthening present and future partnerships within the Turkic world and enhancing cooperation in all fields.

It should not be forgotten that the educational, scientific, and cultural heritages created, sustained, and transmitted through language are not only the shared heritage of that language family, but also a common heritage of all humanity—a valuable treasure that can be utilized to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

With all these thoughts and sentiments, I conclude by saying: May World Turkic Language Family Day be auspicious; may it bring benefit to all humanity!



UNESCO World Turkic Language Family Day

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UNESCO's designation of this year as World Turkic Language Family Day carries a special significance for me—not only as a linguist but also as someone whose life has been profoundly shaped by the Turkish language. Turkish has never merely been an solely academic pursuit, it has been a lifelong passion that has defined my intellectual world throughout my life.

A Childhood Shaped by Language

My interest in Turkish began very early. Growing up in Istanbul, I cherished weekends spent at my grandparents' home who had migrated from Bulgaria to Kırklareli and then to Istanbul during the population exchange. My grandparents pronounce some words and sentences differently, and with the mind of a child, I thought they spoke different types of Turkish.

Everyday sounds such as market calls, neighborhood conversations, and the hum of city life sparked my curiosity about the underlying structure of language. I was only around six years old, yet I found myself imagining all the vowels and consonants and bits and pieces of Turkish as if they were mathematical equations unfolding in real time.

One of my earliest memories related to Turkic languages was listening to the song "Sizə salam getirmisem" sung by Hüseyn Azezoğlu on the television. The musicality of Azerbaijani captivated me and planted the seeds for a lifelong journey dedicated to the heritage of Turkic languages.

A People Rooted in Deep History

The Turks are among the oldest communities in world history, leaving political and cultural legacies across an expansive geography—from the Sea of Japan to the Baltic shores, and from southern Siberia to India, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Wherever Turkic peoples traveled, settled, or ruled, they carried their language with them. Language, more than any other cultural marker, serves as the enduring vessel of shared memory and identity.

Understanding the Turkic Language Family

The Turkic language family is both historically rich and geographically diverse. While occasionally discussed within the controversial "Altaic hypothesis", Turkic languages today are understood primarily through their internal unity and shared historical development.

Scholars classify the evolution of Turkic through several periods—ranging from early Altaic phases to Old Turkic, Middle Turkic, New Turkic, and modern stages—providing a framework for understanding its linguistic trajectory.

The Turkic Languages Around the World

Beyond Turkish, the Turkic language family consists of more than two dozen living languages spoken across a vast region stretching from Eastern Europe to Siberia and Western China. Some of them are:

- **Azerbaijani (Azeri)** – Closely related to Turkish; spoken in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran.
- **Kazakh** – A key Kipchak language spoken across Kazakhstan and western China.
- **Kyrgyz** – Widely spoken in Kyrgyzstan; known for its rich oral epic tradition.
- **Uzbek** – The most widely spoken Turkic language in Central Asia, with deep Timurid literary heritage.
- **Uyghur** – Predominantly spoken in Xinjiang; written in Arabic-based script today.
- **Turkmen** – Spoken in Turkmenistan, Iran, and Afghanistan with strong Oghuz connections.
- **Tatar** – A major Kipchak language spoken in Tatarstan (Russia) and diaspora communities.
- **Bashkir** – Spoken around the Ural region; closely related to Tatar.
- **Chuvash** – The sole surviving representative of the Oghur branch, structurally distinct from other Turkic languages.
- **Karakalpak, Nogai, Altai, Khakas, Sakha (Yakut), Tuva** – Siberian and Kipchak languages preserving archaic phonological features.

Despite their distinctiveness, these languages share deep grammatical, lexical, and structural ties reflecting a common linguistic ancestry.

Turkish in Türkiye and Across the Globe

Within this broad family, Turkish belongs to the Southwestern (Oghuz) branch. Today it thrives, not only as the official language of the Republic of Türkiye, but also across a vast diaspora—from the Balkans to Western Europe, from Australia to North America.

The linguistic presence of Turkish in Anatolia reflects centuries of layered history shaped by migration, settlement, cultural interaction, and language reform.

The First Voices in Writing: The Orkhon Inscriptions

The earliest written records of the Turkic languages—the Orkhon-Göktürk Inscriptions—stand in Mongolia as monumental expressions of early Turkic statecraft, philosophy, and collective memory. Constructed in the 8th century for Kül Tigin, Bilge Kağan, and Tonyukuk, these inscriptions remain foundational sources for understanding early Turkic civilization.



A Written Heritage Across Civilizations

Old Turkic inscriptions carved into *bengü taş* (eternal stones) stretch from Siberia to Mongolia, yet Turkic literary culture extends far beyond stone inscriptions:

- **Kutadgu Bilig** – a work of governance and moral philosophy (Kaşgarlı Mahmud).
- **Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk** – the first comprehensive Turkic dictionary (Kaşgarlı Mahmud).
- **Codex Cumanicus** – a multilingual handbook for communicating with Cuman Turks.
- **Irk Bitig** – a divination text in Old Uyghur script.
- **Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname** – a monumental travel narrative spanning continents.
- **Töre Bitigi** – The lawcode has been translated into Gregorian Zone Kipchak Turkish written in Armenian script.

A Language Written in Many Scripts

Turkic languages have historically been written in:

- Göktürk (Runic)
- Mani and Uyghur
- Syriac
- Sogdian, Brahmi, Tibetan, Chinese
- Arabic, Cyrillic, Armenian, Hebrew, Grek, Latin

Each script represents cultural exchange, religious influence, or administrative necessity.

A Call for Linguistic Continuity

Turkic communities have historically demonstrated loyalty to their languages, yet many face modern endangerment. A language survives only if it is actively spoken, taught, and written.

Preserving Turkish—and all Turkic languages—is both a cultural responsibility and an act of identity preservation. Linguistic unity reinforces bonds across continents and connects us to our shared historical roots.

Honoring a Shared Legacy

World Turkic Language Family Day celebrates not only languages but also civilizations, histories, and generations of speakers who shaped them. It is a celebration of continuity—a reminder that languages live only as long as we actively preserve them.

About the Author:

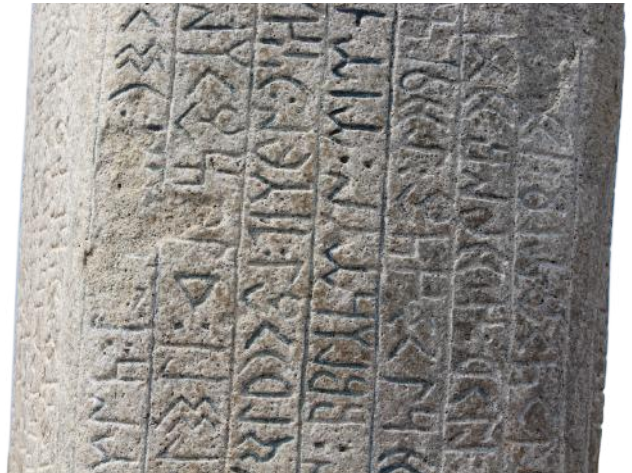
Dr. Milci is a scholar and library specialist with deep expertise in Turkish and Turkic languages. Originally from Istanbul, Türkiye, she has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area since 2014 with her husband and son.

She earned her BA in Turkish Language and Literature from Mimar Sinan University and completed both her MA and PhD in Turkish Philology at Marmara University. With over 15 years of experience as a Turkish language and literature teacher, she has taught in public and private high schools and served as a lecturer at Galatasaray University in Istanbul. Passionate about Islamic manuscripts, bookbindings, and linguistics, Dr. Çetin Milci transitioned to a career as a Middle Eastern library specialist after moving to the U.S.

She currently works at Stanford University Libraries as a Metadata Specialist for Turkish Resources & Complex Copy, where she catalogs a wide range of materials, from modern and historical Turkish texts to Ottoman world holdings.

Her expertise extends across several languages, including Arabic, Persian, Armenian, and Turkic languages, with a research focus on 17th- and 18th-century Gregorian Zone Kipchak Turkish law texts written in Armenian script. She has also applied her linguistic skills at companies such as Facebook, sharing her knowledge across industries.

Dr. Çetin Milci has full proficiency in Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Turkic languages and English, as well as professional working proficiency in Armenian, Arabic, and Persian.





Alev Wieland
ATAA President

Celebrating the Inaugural World Turkic Language Family Day a Historic Cultural and Academic Gathering at the New York Turkish House

Dear ATAA Members,

On December 4, the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), the Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA), and ETAC-USA — all official NGO partners of the UN Department of Global Communications — proudly hosted the first celebration of World Turkic Language Family Day, recognized annually on December 15. This inaugural event was held at the New York Turkish House and brought together diplomats, academicians, community leaders, artists, and youth for a meaningful and vibrant program.

The celebration highlighted the deep cultural and historical roots of the Turkic languages. Language is the bridge linking generations, and the Turkic language family — spanning Turkish, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and more — reflects a shared heritage thousands of years old. The event emphasized the theme “Language Carries Cultural Identity”, reminding us that our languages preserve our identity and shape our future.

Program Highlights and Distinguished Contributors

Opening Remarks

- Berna Gürdal, President, TWLA
- Alev Wieland, President, ATAA

Diplomatic Address

- H.E. Ahmet Yıldız, Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the United Nations

Following Ambassador Yıldız, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Yanal, Türkiye's Consul General in New York, delivered remarks on the significance of the day and the importance of strengthening cultural unity across the Turkic world.

UNESCO Türkiye Speaker Video

- Prof. Dr. M. Öcal Oğuz, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

His message underscored UNESCO's recognition of the Turkic language family and the responsibility to protect and promote linguistic heritage globally.

Expert Speakers

- Prof. Dr. Gregory Key

Department of Middle Eastern and Ancient Mediterranean Studies, Binghamton University

“The Role of the Turkish Language in the Development of Turkish Pop”

- Dr. Feride Hatiboğlu

Department of Languages and Cultures, University of Pennsylvania

“The Family of Turkish: The Shared Story of the Turkic Languages”

Youth Voices

- Ceyda Güllü, Global Politics & International Relations student, METU / Binghamton University

- Berke Genç, International Relations & Global Politics student, Binghamton University

“Youth Language Preferences: Conflict with Foreign Words or Adaptation”

Their speeches reflected the perspectives of young people navigating cultural identity, bilingualism, and the evolving dynamics of language.

Cultural Segment – Music, Poetry & Dance

Attendees deeply enjoyed a rich cultural program showcasing the diversity of the Turkic world:

Inspirations from Turkish Musical Instruments

- Dr. Afsar Barlas, Senior Research Scientist, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Poetry Readings

- “Go’zal” by Abdulhamid Cho’lpon (1919), read by Lapasova Komila, spouse of the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to the UN
- “Bana Zamandan Söz Ediyorlar” by Murathan Mungan, read by Ömer Mungan, Global Politics student, Binghamton University.



Dance Performances

- Tim Tim Dance & Butterfly Dance performed by Crimean Turks
- Performance by the American Karachay-Kavkaz Benevolent Association (AKBA)
Performers: Esma Senman, Hava Senman, Nazim Ozden, and Nour Samkough
- Azerbaijani Dance “Gaval Regsi” performed by CYDC My Way – Child and Youth Development Center, Brooklyn, NY

Musical Performance

- Gulzar Gabman, Kazakh singer, actress, and songwriter
Performed: “Akerke” (Sadyk Karimbayev) and “Dream a Little Dream of Me” (Ella Fitzgerald)
Closing Remarks
- Alev Wieland, President, ATAA
Moderator
- Mine Yenigün, Secretary General, TWLA

(Refreshments served, prepared with the dedicated leadership of Pervin Karamete, ATAA NY Regional Vice President.)

Acknowledgments

Special appreciation goes to organizers, speakers, and cultural performers of the first celebration of this historic event:

- Diplomatic Speakers
- Academic Expert Speakers
- Youth Speakers
- Cultural Performers
- Turkish National Commission for UNESCO
- ATAA: Alev Wieland and her team
- TWLA: Berna Gürdal and her team
- ETAC-USA: Hülya Koç and her team
- Project supporters who contributed throughout the year but could not attend: Dr. Ebru Çetin Milci, Dr. Selim Erhan, Yücel Burdurlu, İrem Göğgenci Jakobson, Ezgi Cohen, Emre Bozer, and Hakan Dakın.

The participation of ambassadors, scholars, artists, community and young leaders, created a truly memorable atmosphere and set an inspiring foundation for future collaborations.

Looking Ahead

I would like to emphasize that this celebration was not only a cultural milestone but also a collective responsibility. Preserving and strengthening the Turkic language family is a duty shared by all generations. Language is the carrier of our identity and culture — and that the Turkic world grows stronger when its communities collaborate, learn from one another, and celebrate their shared heritage.

I would like to invite Turkic American organizations to unite under the ATAA umbrella. Solidarity and shared vision built with this historic day is not only symbolic; they also mark the beginning of larger projects, deeper cultural collaborations, and connections that will carry this mission to future generations to inspiring more academic partnerships, cultural exchanges, youth involvement, and community initiatives. She added that our language is not only a bridge to our past—it is also the guarantee of our future.

Lets be encouraged, to become the ambassadors in amplifying the voice of Turkic languages globally, protecting their diversity, and ensuring its protection for generations to come.

From this year forward, we invite all ATAA members — near and far — to celebrate World Turkic Language Family Day on December 15 with pride.

Happy World Turkic Language Family Day!







Atatürk's Vision for Art, Culture, and the Turkish Language

Dr. Nilüfer Esen Bilgin

ATAA Advocacy Committee Chair
& Past President

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Türkiye, believed that the progress of a modern nation relied not only on political transformation but on cultural, artistic, and linguistic renewal. For Atatürk, art, culture, and language formed the intellectual backbone of society—shaping identity, fostering unity, and elevating the nation's place in the world.

Art and Culture: Vital to a Modern Society

Atatürk saw art as an inseparable element of national vitality. He famously declared, **"A nation without art has lost one of its vital lifelines."**

Guided by this belief, he championed reforms that expanded Türkiye's artistic and cultural horizons:

- **Opera, ballet, and state theaters** were established and supported as public institutions.
- **Art academies, conservatories, and museums** were modernized and expanded.
- **Traditional arts, folklore, and music** were documented and preserved to maintain cultural continuity.
- He encouraged openness to global artistic movements while preserving the distinct identity of Turkish culture.

Atatürk believed that art enriches the human spirit and that a culturally confident society would be better equipped to embrace modernity.

The Turkish Language: Unifying the Nation

One of Atatürk's most transformative contributions was his revolutionary approach to the Turkish language. He believed that language was **the heart of national identity** and that modernization required linguistic clarity and accessibility.



Atatürk introducing the new alphabet to public.

Key initiatives included:

- **The Alphabet Reform (1928)**, which transitioned the language from Ottoman script to a Latin-based alphabet, drastically increasing literacy. Learning how to write and read with Arabic alphabet was difficult and taking too much time. Following the Alphabet Reform, Nation's Schools (Millet Mektepleri) Bylaws was approved as effective of Nov 24, 1928, and the schools operated starting on January 1, 1929 with the aim of teaching literacy to all out-of-school citizens. Atatürk assumed the role of Head Teacher (Başöğretmen) of these schools. Due to this event, November 24th was later declared as Teachers' Day in Türkiye in 1981. Benefits of the reform were seen drastically in a very short time. The literacy rate was recorded as 8.5 % at the 1927 census which was almost doubled to 15.3% at the 1935 census.

- **Founding the Turkish Language Association (Türk Dil Kurumu-TDK) in 1932**, charged with researching, standardizing, and enriching the language. TDK worked on founding, creating new words to replace the Arabic and Persian loanwords. This simplification and purification efforts made education more accessible and strengthened communication across socioeconomic groups.

To Atatürk, language reform was not only cultural but also democratic. It empowered citizens, strengthened national unity, and made scientific and literary knowledge accessible to all.

Atatürk's Thoughts on Turkic Languages

While Atatürk focused primarily on building a strong, modern Republic of Türkiye, he also held a deep appreciation for the linguistic and cultural ties shared among Turkic peoples. His approach was rooted in cultural kinship, scholarship, and respect—not political irredentism.

Atatürk emphasized:

1. The shared linguistic heritage of Turkic peoples

He believed that the Turkic languages—spanning Anatolia, the Balkans, Central Asia, and beyond—reflected a vast and ancient cultural continuum. He encouraged linguists and scholars to study Turkic languages comparatively to better understand this shared history.

2. The importance of scientific research on Turkic languages

Through TDK, Atatürk supported linguistic studies that explored:

- the origins of Turkic languages,
- their grammatical structures,
- their historical evolution,
- and their connections with one another.

In the 1930s, the **Sun Language Theory** emerged with the claim that all world languages derived from an early form of Turkish—a hypothesis that was **not accepted by linguists** and is not supported by modern scholarship. However, the intellectual curiosity and linguistic studies of that period played an important role in stimulating research, encouraging comparative Turkic studies, and ultimately helping to establish **modern Turcology (“Türkoloji”)** as a **respected academic discipline**.

3. Mutual respect and cultural solidarity

Atatürk saw the Turkic-speaking world as a family of related cultures and languages. He honored these ties while emphasizing that Türkiye’s modernization would be grounded in peace, sovereignty, and international cooperation. His cultural approach inspired later generations to foster friendly relations, educational exchanges, and scholarly collaboration among Turkic nations.

A Legacy That Continues to Inspire

Atatürk’s cultural and linguistic reforms laid the foundation for a modern, self-confident, and globally engaged Türkiye. His respect for both Turkish and other Turkic languages continues to inspire scholars, educators, and cultural advocates.

For Turkish Americans and Turkic-speaking communities in the United States, this legacy carries deep significance: It encourages us to **preserve our language, promote our cultural heritage** and **contribute to the multicultural richness of American society**.

Atatürk understood that a society grounded in cultural confidence is better positioned to thrive in the modern world. His vision for art, culture, and language remains a guiding light—a reminder that nations rise not only through political reforms but through the strength of their cultural and linguistic identity.

This year, inspired by the vision and cultural legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the dedicated efforts of Turkish organizations and officials contributed to UNESCO’s decision to proclaim **December 15 as Turkic Language Family Day**. ATAA and its component associations are now preparing to celebrate this meaningful day with great enthusiasm across the United States.

Happy World Turkic Language Family Day!



Dr. Nilüfer Esen Bilgin
ATAA Advocacy Committee Chair
& Past President

In the United States, proclamations issued by governors, mayors, and other elected officials hold significant symbolic and civic value. While they are not legislative acts, proclamations serve as formal acknowledgments—public statements that highlight the history, contributions, and cultural heritage of a particular community.

For ethnic and immigrant groups, such as Turkish Americans, proclamations represent visibility, validation, and a deeper sense of belonging within American society.

Each year, Turkish American associations across the country request proclamations from their local officials in honor of **October 29—Republic Day of Türkiye**, the anniversary of the founding of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923.

Far from being a routine formality, these proclamations play a meaningful role for the community and for the broader understanding of cultural pluralism in the United States.

1. Strengthening Community Visibility

Proclamations formally acknowledge Turkish Americans as part of the diverse social fabric of the United States. This recognition helps counter the under-representation and ensures our community is publicly seen, valued, and respected.

2. Supporting Advocacy Efforts

Engaging with elected officials to secure proclamations builds relationships, opens communication channels, and increases our civic influence.

Each proclamation not only celebrates culture but also reminds decision-makers that Turkish Americans are active, engaged constituents.



Why Proclamations Matter

The Importance of Official Recognition for Turkish American Communities

4. Empowering Community Organizations

Local recognition strengthens the work of Turkish American associations, enhances their credibility, and supports their efforts in cultural programming, youth engagement, and public outreach.

5. Celebrating Identity and Unity

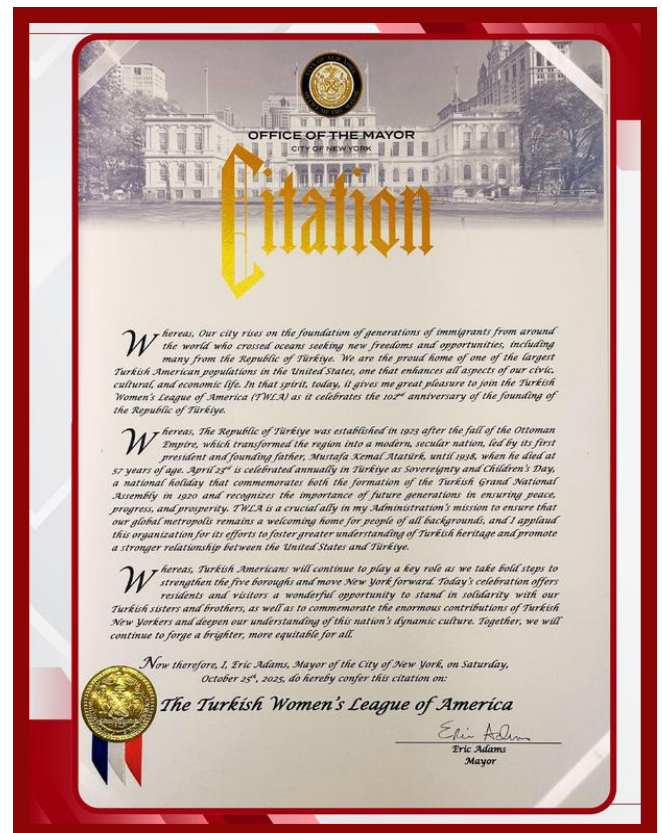
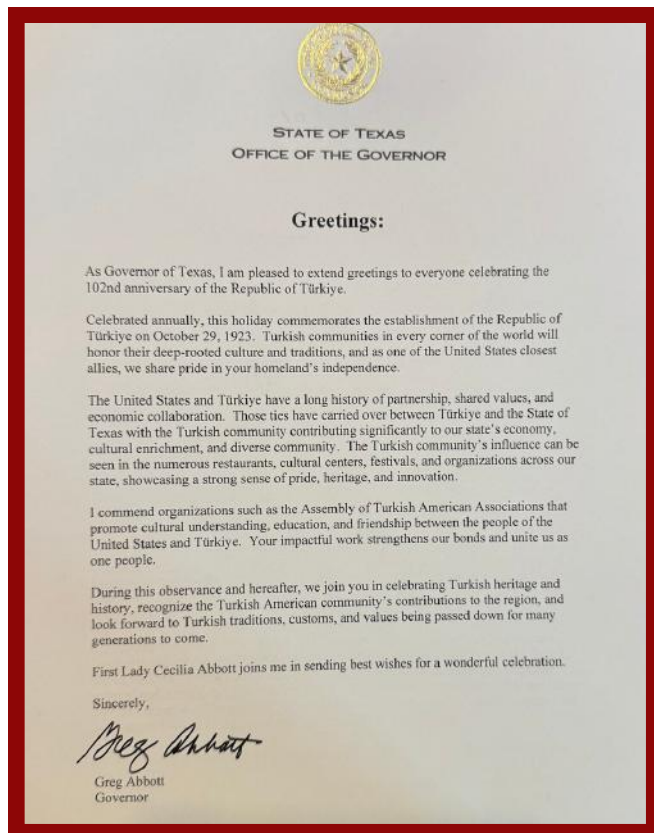
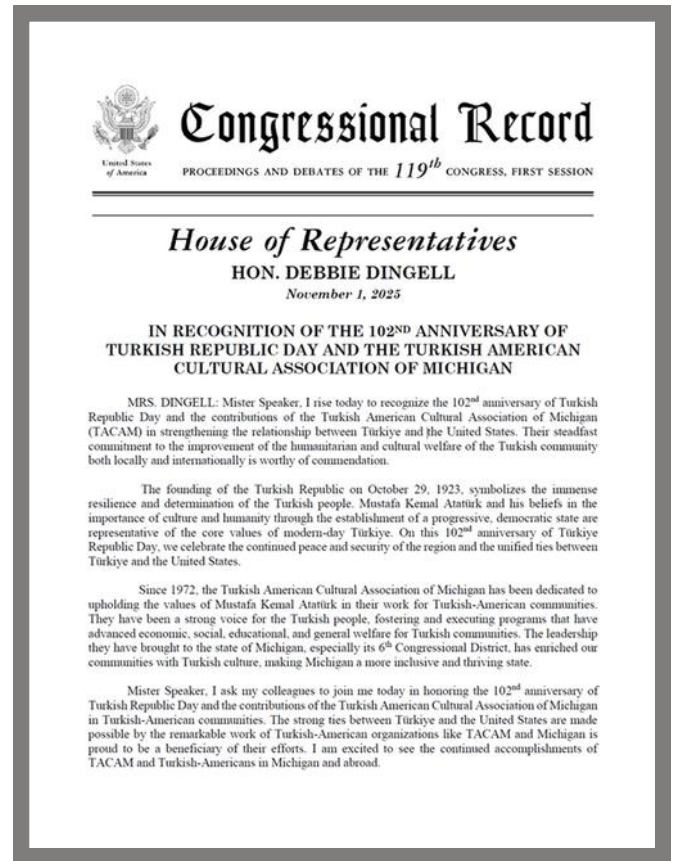
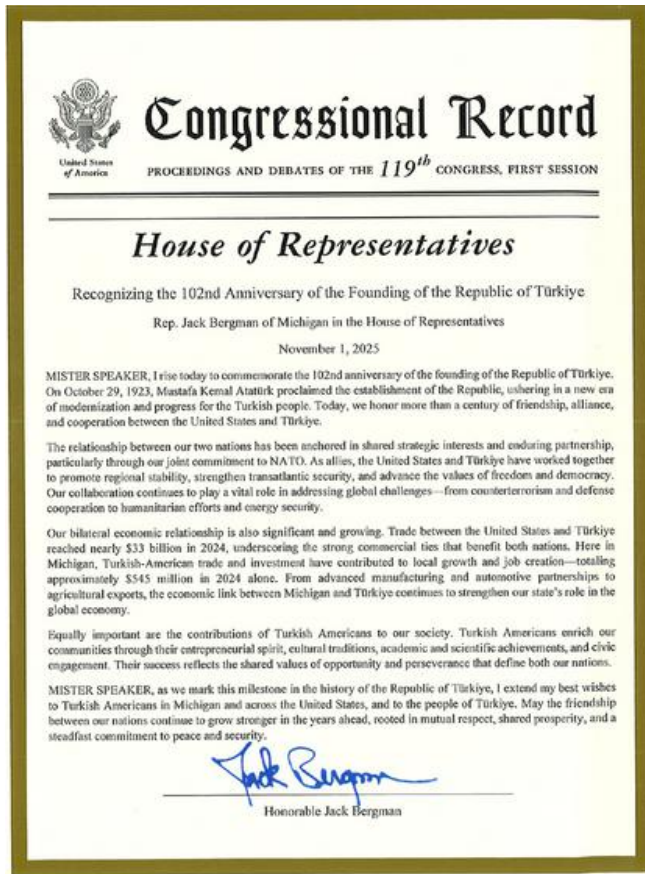
For Turkish Americans—whether born in Türkiye or raised in the U.S.—Republic Day proclamations offer a moment of pride and community connection, reaffirming our heritage while embracing our roles as American citizens.

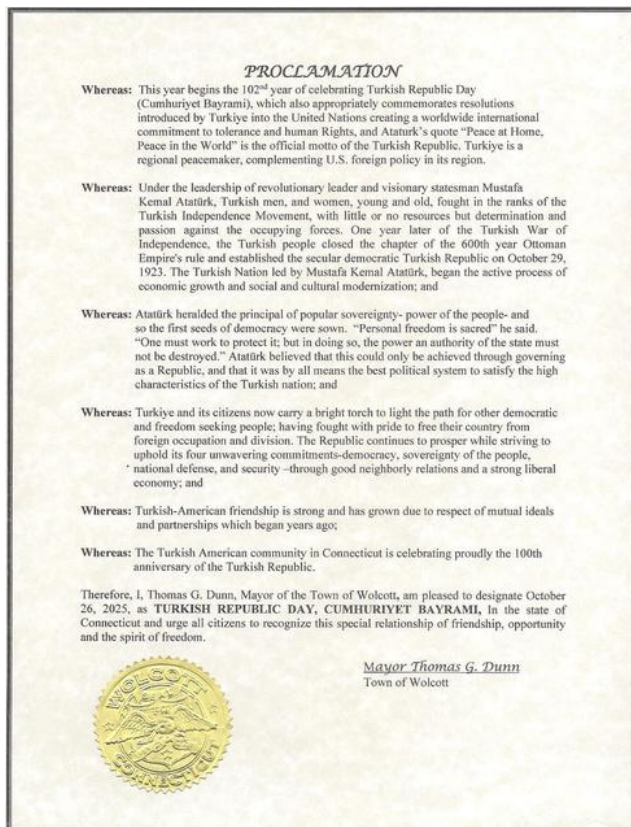
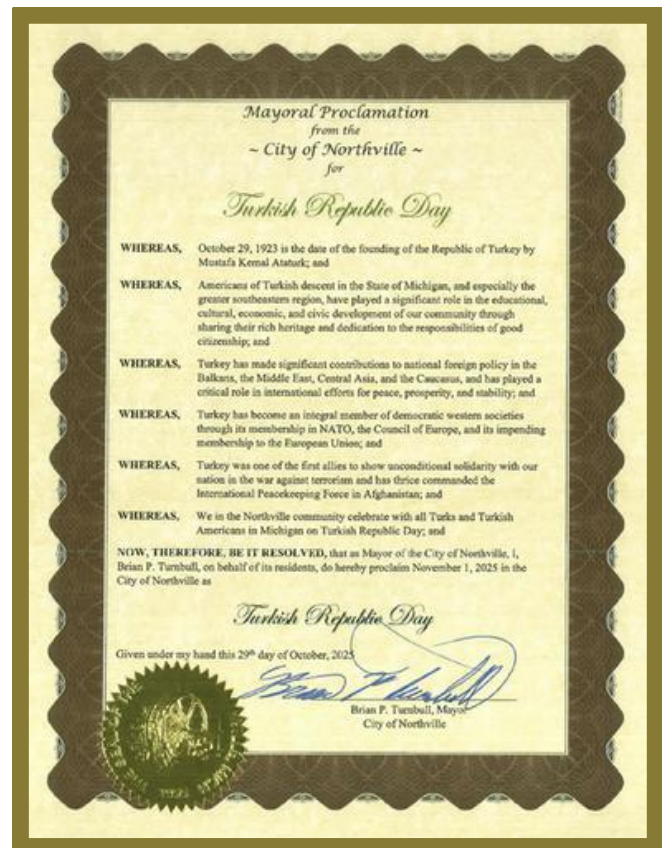
In summary, proclamations are powerful advocacy tools. They elevate the visibility of Turkish Americans, promote accurate cultural understanding, and help build lasting relationships with policymakers.

By continuing to request and share these proclamations each October, our community strengthens both its voice and its place within America's multicultural landscape.

In this regard, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to every community leader who dedicated their time and effort to request, secure, and proudly share a proclamation for the October 29 Republic Day from their local officials.









ATAA Leaders - Rooted in Heritage, Leading with Purpose, Strengthening the Turkish American Community.

ATAA President Alev Wieland delivered the keynote speech at the Cincinnati Turkish American Association (CTAA) Republic Ball, marking a meaningful return to a community she once led. As a CTAA Past President, Mrs. Wieland enjoyed reconnecting with longtime friends while engaging with the organization's new leadership team. CTAA has been long member of ATAA and continues to contribute.

ATAA Secretary Yücel Burdurlu and ATAA Trustee Dr. Selim Erhan also join the celebrations. The presence of ATAA leaders at this memorable celebration highlighted both the continuity of ATAA's legacy and its renewed commitment to the Turkish American community.



CTAA Chorus presented Republic Ball Concert under the direction of Selma Kaşo.



(L-R) **Front Row:** CTAA President Başak Harty, ATAA President Alev Wieland, CTAA Board Members Aysemin Quick and Ayşe M. Keck. **Back Row:** ATAA Secretary Yücel Burdurlu, CTAA board member Nahide Çamur and ATAA Trustee Dr. Selim Erhan.





On Friday, November 21, 2025, H.E. Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal and his wife Figen Önal attended as guest of honor to a reception hosted by ATAA Trustee Ergün Kırlikovalı and his wife Juliana Kırlikovalı's residence who are also a prominent member of Turkish American community in Southern California. Before arriving in Orange County, H.E. Sedat Önal and his wife Figen Önal San Francisco and San Diego Turkish House. Some of the ATAA leaders and members present were: Sema & Bülent Başol, Maria & Turgut Çarkırağa, Burcu Tansu, Ayça Altıntığ, Haluk & Vega Sankur, Los Angeles Consul General Menekşe Onuk and her husband Anıl Onuk.



ATAA President Elect Erkan Demirağcı met with H.E. Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal & Figen Önal. Friday night/November 21 at the Diner took place ATAA Trustee Ergün Kırlikovalı and Juliana Kırlikovalı's residence.

(L-R) Erkan Demirağcı, Figen Önal, H.E. Sedat Önal



H.E. Ambassador Sedat Önal and Mrs. Figen Önal presented an elegant Kütahya porcelain plate to Mr. and Mrs. Kırlikovalı in the presence of the Turkish American community in Southern California.

Ambassador Önal delivered a warm and sincere speech that won the hearts of the Turkish Americans attending the event.

(L-R) Figen Önal, Juliana Kırlikovalı, Ergün Kırlikovalı, H.E. Sedat Önal



ATAA President Elect Erkan Demirağcı attended the ATA-SC Republic Day Ball in CA.

(L-R) Lonnie Delshad, Los Angeles Consul General of Türkiye Menekşe Onuk, Former Mayor of Beverly Hills Jimmy Delshad, Erkan Demirağcı.



ATAA Southeast VP Canan Özaktay attended the Republic Day Ball of TACAF in Tampa, FL.

(L-R) TACAF President Yasemin Akarsu, Miami Consul General of Türkiye Resul Şahinol.



ATAA Northeast Region VP Gökür McAvoy who is also the president of newly established Turkish American Cultural Association of Connecticut (TACACT), organized the first Republic Day Lunch.

Town of Wolcott Mayor Mr. Thomas G. Dunn, State Reps, Boston Consul General of Türkiye Mr. Murat Uğurluoğlu were present and celebrated the Republic Day on Oct 26, 2025 along with several members of Turkish community.

LEAD
FORWARD



ATAA Southeast VP Canan Özaktay attended the Republic Day Ball of ATA-NC at the Sancar Turkish Cultural and Community Center in Chapel Hill, NC on Oct 25, 2025 (Left , Center). She also attended the TACA of Georgia Republic ball on Nov 1, 2025 in Atlanta, GA. (right)

(L-R) Aziz Sancar, Canan Özaktay, ATA-NC President Özgür Özkurt (middle photo), ATAA former president Mazlum Koşma, C. Ö., and TACAGA President Gökhan Yavuz.



ATAA Midwest Region VP Orhan Ilgaz Ülger attended the Republic Day Ball of TAAM in Minneapolis, MN and presented the ATAA 2025 Component Association of the Year Award. (L-R) TAAM Past President Ilgin Sezer, O.I Ülger, the President Neşe Tülay.



ATAA Midwest Region VP Orhan Ilgaz Ülger attended the Republic Day Ball of TACA in Chicago, IL.

(L-R) ErhanTuran, Tamcelik Tunca, Sertan Bertan, Emre Bozer, Ilgaz Ülger, Nur Barutçu, Gizem Tunca (Vice President), and TACA President Türkmen Canlı.



Several ATAA officials met at the Republic Day Ball of TACAM in Michigan on Nov 1, 2025.

(L-R) ATAA Mid-Central region VP, Dr. Mehmet Erdem Yaya, treasurer Kemal Ertugrul Tepe, Past President Dr. Nilüfer Esen-Bilgin, Secretary Yücel Burdurlu, Trustee Dr. Selim Erhan and the former president Gökhan Özalp.



NY region VP Pervin Karamete attended the meetings with New Jersey Congresswoman Nelly Pou, on November 15, 2025.

(L-R) ATAA NY Region VP Pervin Karamete, Senior Advisor at U.S. Federal Government Özlem Aydın, Real Estate Developer & Property Manager Sebahattin Sam Aydın, Turkish American Coalition Action Committee Member Melih Bektaş.



New York Region VP Pervin Karamete played a major role at the Republic Day celebrations at the M.K. Atatürk Schools in NJ. Photo shows her with the students and the teachers of the school.



New York Region VP Pervin Karamete met NJ Congresswomen Nelly Pou.



9th Annual Kırıkova Holiday Party Celebrates Unity, Volunteerism, and Leadership

The 9th Annual Kırıkova Holiday Party, held on December 6, 2025, once again elevated the spirit of unity, solidarity, and productivity within the Turkish American community. With more than 400 distinguished guests, participants from multiple U.S. states and Europe, and 23 nonprofit organizations hosting informational booths, the evening transformed into a true festival of volunteerism.

Organized to honor volunteerism and philanthropy, this special event celebrated the achievements of authors within our community, who were presented with certificates of recognition. In previous years, musicians, food industry entrepreneurs, and patent holders were honored—continuing a meaningful tradition that highlights dedication, creativity, and community contribution.

The night was further enriched by outstanding artistic performances. A magnificent performance by İsmail Özkan filled the hall with vibrant energy and left an unforgettable impression on attendees. We also extend our sincere thanks to Necmi Höke and the AKM Choirs for their wonderful performance, Burak Beşir and Noyan Karakaş for their late-night performance.

A highlight of the program was the presentation of official proclamations of appreciation by California State Senators Steven Choi and Melissa Hurtado to Ergün and Juliana Kırıkova, recognizing their many years of exceptional service and invaluable contributions to the community.

The Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) was proudly represented at this landmark event by ATAA President Alev Wieland, who traveled to join the celebration, along with ATAA President-Elect Erkan Demiragcı and ATAA Western Region Vice President Nil Karakaş. Their presence underscored ATAA's strong commitment to community engagement, volunteerism, and collaborative leadership across regions.

ATAA extends its heartfelt thanks to President Alev Wieland for her leadership and continued support of initiatives that strengthen Turkish American civic life, as well as to President-Elect Erkan Demiragcı and Vice President Nil Karakaş for their dedication and active involvement in advancing ATAA's mission.



(L-R) ATAA Western Region Vice President Nil Karakaş, ATAA President Alev Wieland, ATAA Former President and BOT member Ergün Kırıkova, and ATAA President-Elect Erkan Demiragcı.



Juliana and Ergün Kırıkova stand as a truly remarkable and unparalleled example of dedication and leadership within the global Turkish community. Through their vision and commitment, they continue to bring people together, encourage productivity, honor achievement, and provide meaningful support to numerous nonprofit organizations—many of them operating under the umbrella of ATAA.

On behalf of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations, we extend our deepest gratitude and congratulations to this visionary couple whose work continues to inspire and unite the Turkish American community.



9th Annual Kırlikovalı Holiday Party Celebrates Unity, Volunteerism, and Leadership





A Momentous Day at Berkeley City Hall



ETAC-USA Co-Founder and President Hülya Koç receiving the Proclamation from Benjamin Bartlett Vice Mayor of City of Berkeley in the San Francisco Bay Area.



Empowering the Turkish American Community (ETAC-USA) were deeply honored to receive an official Proclamation from the City of Berkeley, led by the Honorable Vice Mayor Ben Bartlett, recognizing the 102nd Anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic and October 29th as Turkish Republic Day in the city of Berkeley.

This celebration is a powerful reminder of the enduring commitment to democratic values - a legacy started by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk that continues to inspire global civil society and civic engagement.

ETAC-USA thanks Vice Mayor Bartlett, for recognizing the strength, contributions, and dedication of Turkish Americans in making Berkeley and the Bay Area a richer, more vibrant place!

Community involvement goes far beyond simple participation—it is a foundation for creating healthy, thriving, and sustainable environments. When individuals engage with their communities, they gain a deeper understanding of shared needs, challenges, and aspirations.

This sense of connection cultivates mutual trust and encourages people to take ownership of the collective well-being of their surroundings.

Partnering with community groups, organizations, and local leaders who share similar missions strengthens this process even further. These alliances create space for open dialogue, coordinated planning, and shared decision-making.

By combining diverse perspectives, skills, and cultural understanding, communities are better equipped to address issues creatively and effectively.

Strong community involvement broadens access to resources—whether knowledge, volunteers, funding, or physical spaces. When resources are shared, every member benefits, and individuals or organizations that may have been working in isolation suddenly gain support systems that help them thrive.

This sparks innovation, giving rise to new programs, initiatives, and solutions that would have been difficult to achieve alone.

Ultimately, community involvement helps build a resilient social fabric. It ensures that everyone feels valued, empowered, and capable of meaningful contribution.

As relationships deepen and collaboration becomes more natural, communities develop the strength to adapt to challenges, celebrate successes, and sustain long-term impact.

Through collective action, people not only support their own growth but also contribute to a more inclusive and vibrant environment for all.



ATAA Announces Graduate Student Scholarship in Turkish Studies

The Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), with the generous support of Drs. Bilgin Family, is proud to announce the launch of the ATAA Graduate Student Scholarship in collaboration with the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT).

This new scholarship program underscores ATAA's long-standing commitment to promoting Turkish Studies and supporting emerging scholars who contribute to the understanding of Turkish language, history, and culture in North America.

Each year, two graduate students presenting at the AATT Annual Graduate Student Conference will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements and innovative research in the field of Turkish Studies.

The first awardees will be announced during the AATT Graduate Student Conference (2026) and recognized at the ATAA Annual Conference. In addition to receiving the monetary award, recipients will be featured on the ATAA website and in both AATT and ATAA newsletters.

This initiative represents a meaningful step toward strengthening academic collaboration and encouraging new generations of scholars to advance Turkish Studies in the United States and Canada.

For details and application information, visit the AATT website aatturkic.org or contact aattsecretariat@gmail.com with the subject line "ATAA Student Scholarship for AATT Graduate Student Conference."

**ASSEMBLY OF TURKISH
AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS**

SCHOLARSHIP

**EMPOWERING TURKISH STUDIES
GRADUATE STUDENTS**

About

A scholarship program that awards two graduate students each year to attend the Annual Graduate Student Conference of the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT).

Deadline
March 31, 2026

For More Information :
<https://www.ataa.org/about/scholarship/>



Youth Community Stars of 2025



(L-R) Ece Yenigün, Sean Özalpaşan and Yasemin Amanda Knott

A New Generation Leading with Heart

ATAA proudly recognizes three outstanding young leaders whose work reflects the spirit, strength, and global vision of the Turkish-American youth community. This year's Youth Ambassadors—Sean Özalpaşan, Yasemin Amanda Knott, and Ece Yenigün—stand out not only for their service at home, but also for their involvement in international youth programs that build cultural understanding and leadership skills. These remarkable students embody the values ATAA honors: dedication, teamwork, cultural pride, and a readiness to serve. Their efforts continue to unite our youth community and create strong connections across ATAA chapters.

A Global Vision Rooted in Community

Together, Sean, Yasemin, and Ece embody the vision ATAA sets for its youth programs: to build strong leaders, foster cultural pride, and create meaningful global connections. Their involvement across national and international platforms shows how our youth leadership can strengthen ties between cultures and inspire meaningful, long-lasting impact. Their achievements this year reflect a future that is bright, confident, and community-centered. ATAA proudly celebrates their contributions and looks forward to the impact they will continue to make—in the U.S., internationally, and across ATAA's growing youth network.

Sean Özalpaşan

Leadership with Focus and Integrity

Sean has become one of the most steady and reliable leaders in ATAA's youth community. His commitment to cultural projects, teamwork, and event planning has strengthened this year's youth programming. He consistently supports his peers and contributes ideas that elevate the group's vision. Sean also brings ATAA's values to international youth leadership workshops focused on global citizenship, digital responsibility, and innovation. Through these programs, he has represented the Turkish-American community with maturity and professionalism.

Yasemin Amanda Knott

A Connector Through Creativity and Communication

Yasemin's gift for communication and her uplifting presence make her a natural bridge-builder within the youth community. Her creative input shapes cultural activities, outreach efforts, and collaborative projects across chapters. She strengthens the sense of belonging that inspires youth to participate and lead. Yasemin is also active in international cultural exchange forums and global arts programs that bring together students from diverse cultures. Her ability to represent Turkish-American identity with confidence and warmth highlights her as a standout ambassador.

Ece Yenigün

Motivating Others Through Enthusiasm and Heart

Ece brings energy, kindness, and drive to every initiative. She steps in wherever needed, supports her peers, and motivates the group with her enthusiasm. Her leadership shines in cultural celebrations, community service, and youth-driven educational programs. Internationally, Ece participates in youth volunteer networks and global educational programs that promote social responsibility, cultural awareness, and cross-border friendship. Her optimism and dedication make her an inspiring representative of ATAA youth.



ATA-DC 60th Anniversary & Turkish Heritage Month Kickoff

ATA-DC and its community gathered to mark three special milestones — the kickoff of the 14th Turkish Heritage Month, ATA-DC's 60th Anniversary, and the 1st Anniversary as a Virginia Non-Profit. The celebration featured a brunch prepared by Chef Aynur Cooks and highlighted the sense of unity and pride within the Turkish-American community.



ATA-DC Atatürk Commemoration Event Students at ATA-DC's Atatürk School gathered for a heartfelt commemoration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, honoring his enduring legacy with poems and speeches reflecting his vision, wisdom, and devotion to education.



ATA-DC Board members (L-R) Tolga Özek, Güçlü Özenci, Aynur Kahveci Özdemir, Demet Cabbar, Burcu Lale Yüksel, Nilbahar Kahraman, Özlem Yıldız Akkaya, Sema Yelken, Koray Kükrer (VP), Sevtap Kanoğlu Schreffler (President), Özge Övün Sert (Secretary), Büşra Tarhan, Elvan Ramazanoğulları, Berk Somer.



ATA-DC 2025 Republic Day Gala

ATA-DC hosted its Republic Day Gala in Washington, D.C., celebrating the 102nd Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. The evening featured a musical performance by Selin Geçit, remarks from H.E. Ambassador Sedat Önal, Ambassador Damla Güçlü, and Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, Jr., as well as a lively dinner and dance.



ATA-DC Atatürk School Republic Day Celebration

American Turkish Association of Washington DC(ATADC)'s Atatürk School for Children proudly celebrated the 102nd Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. Students performed poems and songs honoring Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and learned about the significance of Republic Day.



ATA-DC Young Cultural Ambassadors Program

The ATA-DC Young Cultural Ambassadors hosted an inspiring session titled "Civic Engagement and Why It's Important for You." The event featured speakers Lydia Borland, President of LB International Solutions, and Lincoln McCurdy, former President of the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA), who shared insights on leadership, civic responsibility, and the power of youth involvement. The program encouraged participants to become active, engaged citizens and highlighted the importance of contributing positively to their communities.

23rd Annual Turkish Festival in Washington, D.C.

The 23rd Annual Turkish Festival in Washington, D.C. attracted thousands of attendees, celebrating Turkish culture with delicious cuisine, lively dance, art displays, and live performances. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers, sponsors, and the community, the festival was a joyful and memorable success.





Civic Involvement Strengthens the Voice and Future of Turkish Americans

Civic duty and active involvement are essential for Turkish Americans to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are understood within local communities. By participating in local issues—whether through voting, attending community meetings, or engaging in public service—Turkish Americans help shape the policies and environments that affect their daily lives. This involvement not only strengthens representation but also builds greater understanding, visibility, and influence for the community as a whole.

One of our long time member Nuray Fuller, attended Federation of Texas Republican Women's Convention in October, and talked to the state representatives and discussed important issues that interests to Turkish Americans



Nuray Fuller with TX
Congresswoman Candy Noblen



Nuray Fuller with TX
Senator Joan Huffman



Nuray Fuller with TX Supreme Court
Chief Justice Jimmy Blacklock



Nuray Fuller with TX Railroad
Commissioner Cristi Craddick





ATAA Celebrates Newly Established Turkish American Cultural Association of Connecticut

The Turkish American Cultural Association of Connecticut (TACA-CT) has been officially formed under the leadership of Göknur McAvoy, in collaboration with the Connecticut Turkish American Community. Mrs. McAvoy is a seasoned and respected community leader who also serves as the Vice President for the Northeast Region of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA).

The establishment of TACA-CT marks an important milestone for the Turkish American community in Connecticut, providing a platform to promote cultural heritage, strengthen community ties, and foster greater civic engagement. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to our friends in Connecticut and wish TACA-CT continued growth, success, and impactful service in the years ahead.





TACAF Celebrates 102nd Anniversary of Turkish Republic

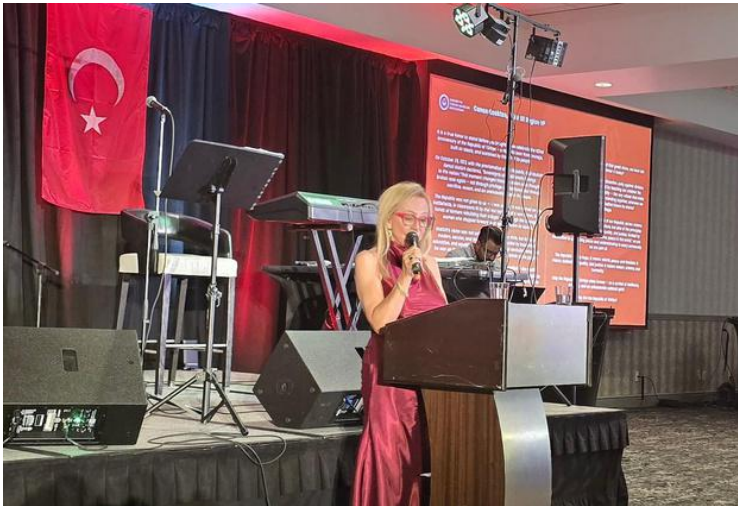


Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 102. yıl kutlamaları, Florida Türk Amerika Derneği (TACAF) Tampa'da düzenlediği etkinlikle devam etti.

Başkan Yasemin Akarsu ve yönetim kuruluna başarılı çalışmaları için teşekkür ederiz.

Celebration of the 102nd year of the Republic of Türkiye continued with Florida Turkish America Association of Florida (TACAF) in Tampa. Thank you to President Yasemin Akarsu and the board for a job well done.

(L-R) Belgin Wolard, Elif Yuksel Zıvalı, Yasemin Akarsu Bulkeley, Miami Council General Resul Şahinoğlu, ATAA South East Region VP Canan Özaktay, Burak Zıvalı.



ATAA Southeast Region VP Canan Özaktay delivered keynote speech at Turkish American Cultural Association of Georgia (TACAGA).

TACA Georgia Hosts Annual Turkish Republic Day Ball



A memorable highlight of the Turkish-American Cultural Association of Georgia's 102nd Republic Ball was the heartfelt celebration of the "invisible heroes" whose dedication and selfless service transform TACA Georgia from an organization into a close-knit family. TACA Georgia proudly honors and celebrates their remarkable contributions in 2025.

Please join us in congratulating this year's award recipients:

- ◆ Mazlum Koşma: Lifetime Achievement recognition for 30+ years of dedication to the Turkish-American diaspora and ATAA leadership.
- ◆ Mona Diamond: For her extensive service as the former Honorary Consul of Türkiye in Georgia.
- ◆ Ünal Bozdağ: For his steadfast leadership as former President during the challenging pandemic years.
- ◆ Muzaffer Sarıtaş: For his generous, long-standing support and commitment as our Diamond Sponsor.
- ◆ Tolbert Yılmaz: For his inspiring leadership and securing official City of Roswell proclamations for our national days.
- ◆ Gökçe, Atil, and Inan: For their artistic contributions and capturing our community memories through cinematography.
- ◆ Gülşah Kasap Doğan: For her creativity in masterminding our diverse community events throughout the year.
- ◆ Buket Bozdağ: For her dedicated leadership and years of commitment to the April 23rd Children's Day Festival.
- ◆ Onur Beytulov: For strengthening our corporate structure and launching our new Ethics & Compliance Committee.

Thank you all for your incredible service to our community!



ATANC Proudly Celebrates the 102nd Anniversary of the Turkish Republic



On October 25, 2025, the Republic Ball, jointly organized by American Turkish Association of North Carolina (ATA-NC), the Sancar Foundation, and BTF, turned into a delightful and meaningful evening with the participation of our distinguished speakers, artists, and guests who kept the energy of the event high throughout the night.

On October 29, 2025, the second event was held by the NC State University TSA (Turkish Student Association), sponsored by ATA-NC and hosted in the ATA-NC event hall. Despite being in the middle of exam season, our young volunteers worked with impressive dedication and delivered a very enthusiastic and successful Republic Day celebration.

We extend our gratitude to our association members, musicians, guest speakers, and our host Anıqa Tariq, all of whom contributed to both events and worked entirely on a voluntary basis. We also wholeheartedly thank all participants who honored us with their presence, stood by us, and helped keep the spirit of the Republic alive.

We offer special thanks to our esteemed sponsors for their support. We thank Nil Basu of Nil Realty for generously sponsoring our music program (Z Band and Anadolu Sevdası), and Can & Doug Dickerson of Edward Jones for sponsoring two tables for our local student guests. We also thank the Republic Ball organizing committee (Ajda Göknil Pazarlı, Ayşe Pamucak, Günseli Sheriff, Nihat Çubukçu, and Özgür Özkurt under the leadership of Semra Tariq).

As ATA-NC, we were proud to celebrate the 102nd anniversary of our Republic with two wonderful events that were prepared with great dedication.

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TAAM Celebrates 102 Years of the Republic of Türkiye



Turkish American Association of Minnesota (TAAM) community shared an amazing evening together celebrating the 102nd anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. It was a beautiful celebration filled with pride and joy. TAAM leadership team sincerely thank everyone who attended. A special thank you to NECATİ VE SAYKOLAR for bringing so much energy and enthusiasm and making this a truly unforgettable night!

TACAM Youth Group Celebrates 102nd Anniversary of Republic of Türkiye



TACAM Youth Group gathered together to celebrate 102nd anniversary of Republic of Türkiye. Some of the youth that were present were ATAA Youth Committee Leaders.

TACAM Kids Arts Exhibit



Turkish American Community of Southern California Welcomes Ambassador Sedat Önal & Mrs. Önal



On Saturday November 22, 2025, Turkish American community in Southern California welcomed H.E. Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal and his wife Figen Önal at the gathering hosted by ATAA Trustee Ergün Kırlikovalı and his wife Juliana Kırlikovalı's residence.

Turkish Society of Canada Commemorates Atatürk on 87th Anniversary of His Passing





TURANT Commemorates the 87th Anniversary of the Passing of Atatürk

On November 9th at the UT Dallas, members of the Turkish American Association of North Texas (TURANT), along with community leaders, gathered to attend the ceremony commemorating the 87th anniversary of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's death, honoring the founder of modern Türkiye and his enduring legacy.

The event brought together individuals of all ages who shared a deep respect for Atatürk's visionary leadership, his commitment to secularism, education, and national unity, and his lasting influence on both Turkish society and the global community.

For participants, the day carried profound meaning—not only as a moment of remembrance, but also as an opportunity to reflect on the values Atatürk championed and the responsibilities of preserving those principles for future generations.

Through speeches, moments of silence, and expressions of gratitude, the community reaffirmed its connection to its cultural heritage and its dedication to keeping Atatürk's ideals alive.

This meaningful ceremony was proudly organized by the newly established TURANT Youth Committee.





TURANT Celebrates 102nd Anniversary of Turkish Republic



The Turkish American Association of North Texas (TURANT) proudly celebrated the 102nd anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The performances by Necati ve Saykolar brought a remarkable sense of energy and enthusiasm, making this year's celebration truly memorable and special for everyone in attendance!



(L-R) ATAA Trustees Dr. Fatma Gül and Kürşat Doğru, ATAA President Alev Wieland, ATAA Past Secretary Erdal Sipahi.



(L-R) TURANT BOD Members: Ipek Rudd, Huricihan Taskonak, Dr. Gonca Usta, Aylin Gomez, Nimet Kara.



TURANT newly established Youth Committee members. (L-R) Burak Özsoy, Alev Wieland, Dr. Gonca Usta, Doruk Özyurt, Deniz Aral.



L-R) ATAA Former Secretary Erdal Sipahi, ATAA President Alev Wieland, Azteca Beverages President Nadeem Zaman.





New York Atatürk School Celebrates Republic Day

The New York Atatürk School, part of the Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA), celebrated Republic Day on October 29 with joy and pride. During the event, a special proclamation sent by the Mayor of New York was presented in a ceremony on behalf of the students, who represent the future of the Republic.



COEDFO Visits Texans Can Academies

Contemporary Education Foundation (COEDFO) Leadership team visited Texans Can Academies, North Dallas and presented their yearly Scholarship Check November 6, 2025.

(L-R) COEDFO Director Pelin Hoskan San, COEDFO President Dr. Fatma Gül, Dallas CAN Academy Principle Joe Luis Antunez, COEDFO Secretary Alev Wieland, COEDFO Director Muazzaz Sarver.



COEDFO Leadership team met for yearly planning meeting for 2026 programs. After the meeting they all participated gathering TURANT organized.

(L-R) COEDFO Secretary Alev Wieland, Volunteer Nimet Kalender, President Dr. Fatma Gül, Director Pelin Hoskan San, Director Didem Çamlıca, Director Muazzaz Sarver, Director Nazli Bektaş Kutlu.



Turkish American Cultural Association of Georgia's Fall 2025 Events

Honoring the Memory & Resilience of the Ahıska Turks



On November 15, Turkish-American Cultural Association of Georgia (TACA Georgia) leadership, Gökhan Yavuz and Mazlum Koşma, joined the community in commemorating the 81st anniversary of the tragic 1944 deportation (Sürgün). While honoring the suffering endured, they also celebrated the resilience and enduring strength of the Ahıska people. TACA Georgia is proud to stand in solidarity with Ahıska Turks.

Sincere thanks are extended to the Ahıska Turkish Community Center of Atlanta and its President, Mustafa Taştan, for hosting this meaningful event. Special thanks are given to the Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Resul Şahinol, for emphasizing the importance of unity with our brothers and sisters.

Commemorating Atatürk's Enduring Legacy

The Turkish American community in Georgia came together for their annual remembrance ceremony honoring Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Organized in collaboration with gatech.tso, the event brought together students, faculty, and community members to reflect on Atatürk's contributions and the lasting impact of his vision.

The program highlighted Atatürk's ideals of leadership, modernization, and dedication to education. The ceremony served not only as a commemoration but also as an opportunity for the Turkish American community to strengthen cultural ties and celebrate shared values.

Organizers expressed gratitude to all participants for joining in this important tradition, emphasizing the significance of remembering Atatürk's legacy and inspiring future generations.





San Diego Turks Celebrate the 102nd Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye

A Concert in Honor of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on the 102nd Anniversary of Republic of Türkiye in San Diego, California.

ATASC San Diego Turkish Music Chorus offered audiences an unforgettable evening with a special concert held as part of Turkish Heritage Month.

The San Diego Turkish Music Chorus celebrated the 102nd anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye with a special concert held on November 8, 2025, in San Diego, California. The distinguished repertoire of Turkish classical music performed by the choir received great admiration from the audience, and the venue was filled to capacity.

Under the direction of Choir Conductor Necmi Höke, the ensemble presented a two-part program. In the first part, the choir performed a fasıl consisting of Hicaz pieces from various periods of Turkish music, delivering an emotional and pride-filled experience to listeners.



The concert was organized as part of “Turkish Heritage Month,” proclaimed by the City of San Diego in November 2025 through the initiatives of our choir, adding special significance to the evening. Our esteemed guest artist and instructor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aylin Şengün Taşçı, took the stage as the soloist in the second part, bringing a unique depth and color to the program. She also conducted workshops in both San Diego and Los Angeles, sharing the history of Turkish music along with exemplary song interpretations.



A portion of the proceeds from the event was donated to our forest campaign, initiated to support areas in Türkiye affected by wildfires and named in honor of our choir.

With this meaningful concert, the San Diego Turkish Music Chorus not only celebrated our cultural heritage but also commemorated Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk with love, respect, and cherished songs. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our audience, sponsors, and our entirely volunteer-based choir for their invaluable support.



House of Türkiye Welcomes Ambassador Sedat Önal in San Diego



San Diego - House of Türkiye had the distinct honor of hosting His Excellency Ambassador Sedat Önal and Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye in Los Angeles Menekşe Onuk, accompanied by Mrs. Figen Önal, former Deputy Consul General in Los Angeles.

Ambassador Önal, Consul General Onuk, and Mrs. Önal visited our Turkish House and held meetings with the leaders of the San Diego Turkish organizations — House of Türkiye, ATASC-SD, ATASC Turkish School, ATASC San Diego Turkish Music Chorus, and Bridge to Türkiye Fund San Diego. During these engagements, they attentively listened to the concerns and requests of our citizens residing in the region.





Turkish American Association of California Fall 2025 Events

2nd San Francisco Turkish Festival Brings Color, Culture, and Community to Embarcadero Plaza, September 27–28, 2025

The California Turkish American Association (TAAC) proudly celebrated the success of the 2nd San Francisco Turkish Festival, held on September 27–28 at Embarcadero Plaza. The two-day event drew nearly 7,000 visitors, showcasing Turkey's rich cultural heritage through traditional foods, crafts, jewelry, ceramics, and cultural exhibits.

Festival Highlights

- Popular Bay Area Turkish musicians — Taksim Big Band, 4 Artı 1, Ester & Mert, DJ Emre Tekin, and Çağatay — filled Embarcadero Plaza with music.
- Hereke silk carpet master Süheyla Sarı demonstrated the weaving of some of the world's finest silk carpets.
- Ebru artist Vesile Yılmaz and calligrapher Yasemin Keskin offered hands-on workshops in traditional Turkish arts.
- The California Kazakh American Association displayed an authentic Kazakh yurt.
- Visitors enjoyed Mevlevi whirling dervishes, Zeybek, Artvin, and Silifke folk dances, and performances by Azerbaijani, Kazakh, and Uyghur groups.

More than 40 vendors and local Turkish restaurants participated, while one of the most visited areas featured Anatolian Kangal and Shepherd dogs, symbols of Turkish heritage.

The festival opened with remarks by Los Angeles Turkish Consul General Menekşe Onuk. Berkeley City Council member Ben Bartlett highlighted the festival's cultural contribution to the region, and THY San Francisco Director Şerafettin Ekici was among the guests.

This year also marked the 50th anniversary of TAAC, an entirely volunteer-run organization committed to making the festival an annual Bay Area tradition.

The event brought together many Turkic communities, including the American Turko-Tatar Association, the Azerbaijani Cultural Association, the Kazakh American Association, the Uyghur Cultural Center, the Turkmen community, and the Uzbek Community Center.

Free and open to the public, the San Francisco Turkish Festival remains one of the city's most vibrant multicultural celebrations, sharing the beauty, history, and spirit of Turkey and the Turkic world with the Bay Area.





Turkish American Association of California Hosted 102nd Anniversary Republic Day Ball

The Turkish American Association of California (TAAC) proudly hosted another sold-out **Turkish Republic Day Ball** on Saturday, November 1, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Burlingame. The event brought together members of the Turkish American community and friends of Türkiye to honor the **102nd anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye's founding**.

The evening featured a **special exhibition of rare and never-before-seen photographs of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**, offering guests a unique visual journey through the early years of the Republic. Attendees also enjoyed a screening of **"The Road to Independence,"** a short documentary by acclaimed journalist **Nebil Özgentürk**, highlighting the struggle and vision that shaped modern Türkiye.

Flag Color Exchange Ceremony

At the Republic Day Ball, U.S. Air Force Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol cadets, together with **Talya and Tuana Bingöl**, took part in a special **color guard presentation**, during which the Turkish and U.S. flags were ceremonially exchanged. This symbolic gesture, honoring friendship and mutual respect between the two nations, stood out as a unique and unforgettable highlight of the evening.

Musical Performances

The celebration featured a rich and inspiring musical lineup, including:

- Ester & Mert Duo
- Monterey Turkish Women's Choir
- Taksim Big Band

Their performances filled the ballroom with the spirit, passion, and cultural vibrancy of the Turkish Republic.

Theme of the Night

This year's theme celebrated **"the colors of the Republic."** Guests were encouraged to wear red, while gentlemen received **white carnations**, symbolizing elegance, unity, and the enduring spirit of the Republic.

The Turkish American Association extends its heartfelt thanks to all attendees, performers, and volunteers who helped make this year's Republic Day Ball an unforgettable celebration of Turkish history, culture, and community.





November 10th Commemoration of Our Great Leader, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

The Turkish American Association of California hosted the San Francisco premiere of the documentary film "Mustafa Kemal's Sofia Years 1913–1915" on Sunday, November 9, as part of the November 10 Commemoration of our Great Leader, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

At the invitation of our association, the film's producer and screenwriter, **Nahide Deniz**, traveled from Türkiye to join us for this meaningful event.

The program began with a moment of silence in honor of Atatürk and his comrades-in-arms, followed by the Turkish National Anthem. We commemorated the founder of our Republic, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, with love, respect, and gratitude on the **87th anniversary** of his passing.

It was a great honor to host the San Francisco premiere of this comprehensive documentary, which is based entirely on archives, historical records, and documents, shedding light on Atatürk's years as **military attaché** in Sofia between 1913 and 1915.

In her remarks, the film's producer, **Nahide Deniz**, said: "In this documentary, we followed Atatürk's traces in Bulgaria from 110 years ago. Our work is based entirely on archives, information, and documents. We succeeded in bringing to light many previously unknown facts. Moreover, despite the passage of so many years, seeing that Atatürk's legacy remains vivid and remembered across the Balkan region made us proud."



Ambassador Sedat Önal and Consul General of Los Angeles Menekşe Onuk Attend TAAC Community Meeting.



T.C. Ambassador Sedat Önal, who visited our region from Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles Consul General Menekşe Onuk were the guests of the "Community Meeting" organized by TAAC on Tuesday, November 18.

At the well-attended event, Ambassador Önal met with participants one by one, listened to their thoughts and concerns, and spoke with them.

We sincerely thank Ambassador Sedat Önal and Consul General Menekşe Onuk'a for their kind visit.

We also extend our gratitude to Emin Bey, the owner of Sultana Restaurant, and his team for hosting our meeting and for their warm hospitality and support





The 30th Anniversary of the Turkish American Friendship Room

Dr. Nilüfer Esen Bilgin

ATAA Advocacy Committee Chair
& Past President

The University of Michigan Turkish Student Association (UMichTSA) held a special gathering on November 19, 2025, to bring together Turkish students and faculty and to celebrate the **30th anniversary of the Turkish American Friendship Room (TAFR)**, located on the 4th floor of the Shapiro Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Despite the short notice, the event attracted an enthusiastic group of more than 40 undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty members, who enjoyed meeting one another and exchanging ideas.

The event was generously sponsored by ATAA Past President Dr. Nilüfer Esen-Bilgin and Mrs. Burcin Yavuz, who provided homemade food and tea. ATAA Mid-Central Region Vice President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Erdem Yaya also attended and engaged with the students.

UMichTSA President Bora Bedir opened the program with welcoming remarks, noting that this was their first event of the academic year and expressing the group's intention to organize more gatherings in the coming months. Dr. Esen-Bilgin then offered a brief history of the Friendship Room, provided an overview of ATAA's mission, and introduced the ATAA Youth Committee, which aims to establish a nationwide network among Turkish and Turkish American students across the United States.

The Turkish American Friendship Room was established in 1995 thanks to the leadership of **Feyza Sayman, TACAM President Bülent Gençel, Vice President Ali Kayaalp**, other dedicated board members, and more than **\$20,000** in donations from members of the Turkish American community.

You can read more about the history and significance of the Friendship Room in the following articles:

By John Crofoot: Pilevneli Mural Graces TAFR

By Ali Kayaalp TAFR History, TACAM Newsletter 2022 Summer Special issue pg. 9



A quote of M.K. Atatürk engraved on a marble decorates the room.



At the UMich TSA gathering in the TAFR (L-R) Nilüfer Esen-Bilgin (ATAA President), Tayfun Bilgin, Yeşim Kayaalp, Ali Kayaalp (TACAM former VP), Ekin Kayaalp, a grad student, Tayfun Özdemir (TSA former president).



TSA current president Bora Bedir (the second from the right) is welcoming the guests.





Alev Wieland

ATAA President

president@ataa.org

Help us to continue our
critical work by
donating today!

In a world facing complex global challenges, the ATAA UN Committee remains committed to promoting peace, cultural understanding, human rights, and sustainable development. The past year has underscored what we can accomplish when we act with purpose, unity, and conviction.

2025: What We Delivered Together

Here are some of the key programs and events the ATAA UN Committee and the Partner Organizations jointly successfully organized in 2025 — each reflecting our values, our reach, and our commitment to global citizenship.

- **Compulsory Peace Education Through ICTs (January 25, 2025)** — Through this virtual initiative, we gathered educators, experts, and youth to explore ways to build peace education into digital and school environments. This program underscores our belief that peace begins with awareness and education — especially among younger generations. (LM, ATAA, and other partners)
- **Why I am Speaking Turkish (February 23, 2025)** — Celebrating the value of language, identity and cultural heritage, this program encouraged participants to explore the history and contemporary importance of the Turkish language, fostering pride and connection among Turkish-American and Turkic communities. (ATAA, TWLA & ETAC-USA)
- **Gender Empowerment and Equality – Breaking Free from Gender Stereotypes and Expectations (March 9, 2025)** — In support of International Women's Day, the Committee joined allied organizations to host a webinar focused on gender empowerment, equality, and challenging stereotypes — engaging youth, leaders, and community members to dialogue and envision more inclusive societies. (ATAA, TWLA, ETAC-USA, TWI, DLD & ACMA)
- **Fostering Peaceful Dialogue – Historical Reflection and Youth Collaboration (April 27, 2025)** — On the occasion of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, ATAA convened youth and community leaders for a meaningful conversation on history, diplomacy, and collaborative peace-building — reinforcing our commitment to dialogue and mutual understanding. (ATAA, TWLA, AKM, ACMA)
- **Dil Kültürün Taşıyıcısıdır (Language Carries Cultural Identity) (September 7, 2025)** — Celebrating linguistic heritage and the unity of Turkic culture, this webinar reaffirmed the power of language in preserving identity, heritage, and inter-community bonds across generations and geographies. (ATAA, TWLA, ETAC-USA)
- **Inspiring Change: Young Minds, Global Goals (November 16, 2025)** — In commemoration of World Science Day for Peace and Development, ATAA organized this event to engage youth and community members in dialogue about global goals, sustainability, and the role of science and education in fostering peace and progress.
- **December 15, World Turkic Language Family Day - World Turkic Language Family Day**, proclaimed by UNESCO on December 15, is an important observance that celebrates the deep-rooted history, linguistic unity, and cultural connections among Turkic languages and the communities that speak them.

Beyond these signature events, the ATAA UN Committee continued working behind the scenes to advance our broader mission — strengthening ties with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UN-DGC), aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and ensuring that Turkish-American voices are heard in global civil society.



ATAA STEAM Program help us to continue our enable our young capable Turkish American students to reach their potential.



Trees are essential for both people and the environment. They enhance air quality, carbon sequestering, energy conservation, water sustainability, reduction of storm water runoff and erosion, increase water quality, provide noise reduction, serve as wildlife habitat.



This Turkish/English e-Book is designed and published to educate our children about peace, friendship, respect, diversity, honesty, love, and environment.



Why These Accomplishments Matter?

Each of the above programs reflects more than a single event — they embody a principle, a commitment, and a long-term vision:

- Peace through education and dialogue: Programs like Peace Education and Fostering Peaceful Dialogue promote understanding, critical thinking, and solidarity among youth and communities — foundations for long-term peace and cooperation.
- Cultural identity and its preservation: By celebrating language, heritage, and cultural connection, ATAA nurtures a sense of belonging and shared identity among Turkish-Americans and the broader Turkic diaspora, strengthening community bonds across generations.
- Empowerment and equality: Through Gender Empowerment events, ATAA elevates voices — especially of young women and youth — encouraging active participation, leadership, and equitable opportunities.
- Global awareness, civic engagement, and sustainable development: Programs such as “Inspiring Change: Young Minds, Global Goals” bridge local community engagement with global challenges, inspiring individuals to think and act as global citizens.
- Youth engagement and inter-generational continuity: By focusing on youth, language, culture, and education, ATAA ensures that the next generation is informed, engaged, and ready to lead — keeping the spirit of unity and progress alive for years to come.

Looking Ahead — How We Build on 2025 Accomplishment?

Moving forward, the ATAA UN Committee aims to leverage the momentum of successes to deepen impact and broaden outreach:

- Expand our educational initiatives on peace, heritage, and civic engagement — making them more accessible, bilingual, and youth-centric.
- Strengthen connections with our partners and UN-DGC and other civil society organizations to co-host events addressing global challenges: sustainable development, climate resilience, cultural preservation, human rights.
- Foster greater representation of Turkish-American voices in international forums and dialogues, ensuring our community’s perspectives contribute to broader global discourse.
- Empower youth and women through leadership opportunities, mentorship programs, and inclusive platforms — giving them a seat at the table in shaping our collective future.
- Encourage community-driven cultural and educational programs that reinforce identity, unity, and mutual respect — while building bridges across ethnic, national, and generational lines.

The accomplishments of 2025 are a testament to what can be achieved when communities come together, guided by shared values and a collective vision. But this is not where we end — it is where we grow.

The ATAA UN Committee calls on every member, supporter, and friend: join us, engage, contribute, speak out, and build. Together, we can transform dialogue into action, identity into unity, and aspirations into reality.

Our journey continues — and the path forward is brighter when we walk it together.

Help us to continue our critical work by donating today!



ATAA STEAM Program help us to continue our enable our young capable Turkish American students to reach their potential.



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Inspiring Change: Young Minds, Global Goals



Help us to continue our critical work by donating today!



ATAA STEAM Program help us to continue our enable our young capable Turkish American students to reach their potential.

On November 16, 2025, The Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC), will hold a virtual event titled “Inspiring Change: Young Minds, Global Goals” in commemoration of the 87th anniversary of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s passing and in support of World Science Day, UNESCO 31/C Res. 20 | 10 November. World Science Day for Peace and Development.

Celebrated each year on November 10, World Science Day for Peace and Development serves as a powerful reminder of the vital role science plays in advancing society and promoting human well-being. It emphasizes the importance of engaging the broader public in meaningful dialogue about emerging scientific challenges and ethical responsibilities, while highlighting the profound relevance of science in our everyday lives.

By fostering a stronger connection between science and society, this day seeks to ensure that citizens remain informed about scientific progress and innovation. It also pays tribute to the indispensable contributions of scientists—those who expand the boundaries of human understanding and help build a more sustainable and equitable world. While science has the potential to uplift and transform lives, it also demands the highest standards of responsibility and integrity to prevent misuse that could harm humanity.

In this program, we honored the remarkable achievements of pioneering medical scientists whose discoveries have safeguarded humanity from deadly diseases and saved countless lives.

For Turkish youth, this day holds even deeper significance. Inspired by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the visionary founder and first President of the Republic of Türkiye, they uphold his timeless principle: “Peace at home, peace in the world.” Wherever they reside, Turkish youth strive to embody this ideal by contributing to peace, progress, and sustainability in their communities.

2025 November 10 also marks the 87th anniversary of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s passing. On this solemn occasion, Turkish youth remember and honor his enduring legacy—dedicating this program to the young people of the world, whose curiosity, courageous, and compassion continue to shape a brighter future for all.

Student Speakers:

Kaan Güleriyüz - Why Ocean Science Belongs in Every High School Classroom: A Student’s Perspective on Building Sustainable Societies

Kaya Kuşçu - A Holistic Approach to Achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Bartu Milci - Plastic Eating Bacteria Helping Develop and Sustain the Earth

Burak Can Ünlüsoy - When Politics Divide, Science Unites



Trees are essential for both people and the environment. They enhance air quality, carbon sequestering, energy conservation, water sustainability, reduction of storm water runoff and erosion, increase water quality, provide noise reduction, serve as wildlife habitat.



This Turkish/English e-Book is designed and published to educate our children about peace, friendship, respect, diversity, honesty, love, and environment.



Sean Özalpaskan
ATAA UN Youth Representative



Yasemin Knott
TWLA UN Youth Representative



Ece Yenigün
TWLA UN Youth Representative

Help us to continue our critical work by donating today!

10 Kasım Commemoration Day Event - Hosted by Turkish Society of Canada

On November 9th, 2025, the Turkish Society of Canada (TSC) hosted a Commemoration Day conference, “Beyond Borders: Atatürk’s Global Vision and Today’s Youth,” highlighting Atatürk’s enduring legacy and impact on younger generations. In the months leading up to the event, the executive board of TSC, two representatives from the Turkish Student Association of Canada, and our youth panel worked together in weekly planning sessions to design the program and ensure a meaningful, cohesive event.



The conference opened with remarks from the Turkish Consul in Toronto, Mert Say, followed by a foreword from Dr. Feyzi Baban, Professor of International Development Studies at Trent University. The main program was split into two parts: speeches from the Youth speakers, followed by a youth-moderated discussion.



Sean presented “Atatürk’s Republican Values: Transforming Turkish Youth” a brief analysis of the values Atatürk brought with him with the creation of the Turkish Republic. He analyzed what these new values and cultural reformations did for the Turkish youth, and the new opportunities and vision they were given. He concluded by tying the significance of these values into the youth of the Turkish Diaspora today, and how we carry Atatürk with us everyday.

Yasemin presented “Not Without Him: Atatürk’s Living Legacy” on Atatürk’s educational reforms and the lasting impact on Turkish youth living abroad. She specifically addressed Atatürk’s empowerment of youth to receive equal access to education regardless of gender, as well as making revolutionary changes in women’s education. Yasemin described Turkish youth as Atatürk’s living legacy, explaining that we have had opportunities to pursue education and careers in our chosen fields due to his pioneering accomplishments.



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Ece presented "An Unfinished Project: Atatürk's Vision and the Power of Turkish Women" continuing the conversation on equality by emphasizing Atatürk's unwavering belief that the future of the Republic depended on the empowerment of women. She explored how Atatürk transformed an entire nation by insisting that women share the same education, rights, and public voice as men, highlighting the various reforms that opened universities, expanded legal personhood, and granted full suffrage to Turkish women decades ahead of many nations, emphasizing that these changes reshaped not only law but identity. Ece concluded by reflecting on the reality of today, noting that despite the progress Atatürk made possible, the global struggle for women's safety and equality continues. Speaking directly to the youth, Ece concludes by reminding us that sustaining this progress requires vigilance, clarity, and a continued commitment to the principles Atatürk set in motion.

Help us to continue our critical work by donating today!



ATAA STEAM Program help us to continue our enable our young capable Turkish American students to reach their potential.



After the speeches, it was time for the Youth-moderated discussion. Sean was the moderator, asking relevant questions that dove deeper into the topics touched upon throughout the speeches. Questions pertaining to Atatürk's role in shaping the youth, how Turkish identity has changed over time, and identifying the intrinsic bond between language and culture all helped better our own thinking about these topics as speakers, and also left a lasting impression on the audience.



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The Quiet Superhero of Civilization

Interview by Pelin Hoskan

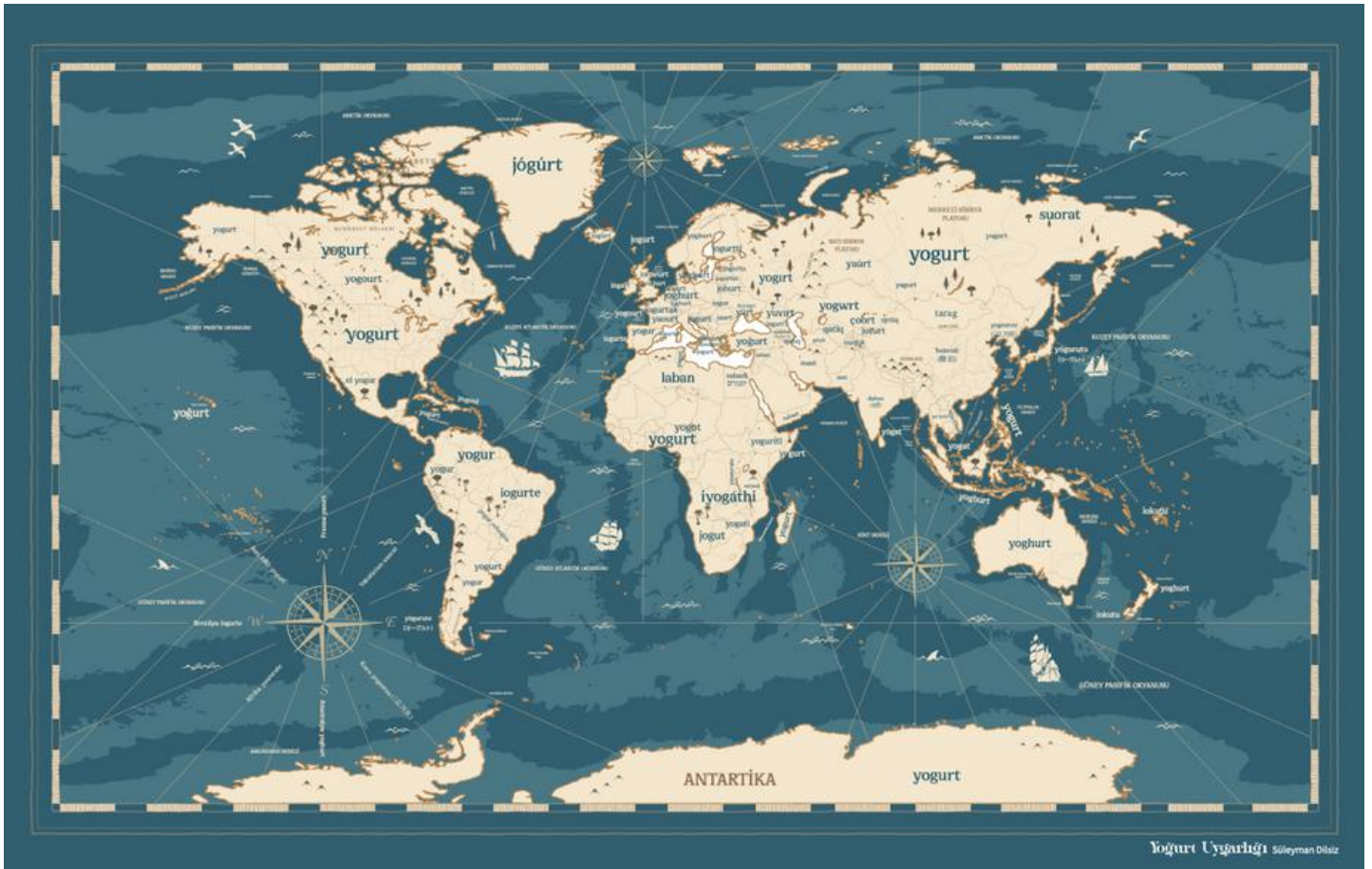
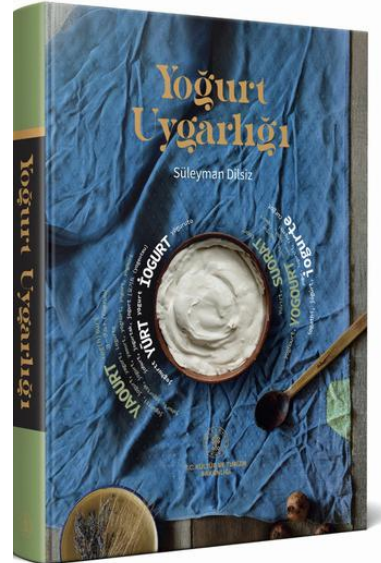
artnews@ataa.org

Süleyman Dilsiz on the cultural, linguistic, and biological legacy of yogurt

In a year when the Turkic languages receive global recognition as a cultural heritage, it feels fitting to turn our attention to one of its most enduring gifts to the world: **yogurt**.

A food with the humility of white linen and the depth of an ancient manuscript, yogurt has traveled further than many empires.

Few people have followed this journey as meticulously—or as affectionately—as Süleyman Dilsiz, researcher, writer, and the spirited mind behind *The Yogurt Civilization*. He calls himself a “culinary time-traveler,” a wanderer who reads history not from monuments but from spoons. His mission: to restore yogurt to its rightful place in the global story of culture, health, and language.



The Man With a Spoon for a Passport

Dilsiz does not study cuisine as a collection of recipes but as a living archive.

“Some people recognize countries by their airports,” he says. “I recognize them by the traces left on their spoons.”

His path has led him from the Anatolian plateau to the Balkans, from Central Asian yurts to Mediterranean islands. In each place, the same white, slightly tangy companion appeared—quiet, constant, and deeply embedded in ritual.

From this mosaic emerged what he now calls “**The Yogurt Route**”: a cultural road older than the Silk Route and more intimate than any trade path, carried not by merchants but by shepherds, mothers, healers, and travelers.

A Word That Carried a Civilization

The word *yoğurt* has remained one of the rare culinary terms that the world adopted in its original Turkish form—an act of linguistic respect that rarely occurs.

Derived from *yoğurmak*—to knead, to transform, to mature—the term describes not only the food but the technique, the intelligence, and the patience behind it.

“Rome had its roads. China had its silk,” Dilsiz says.

“We gifted yogurt to the world.”

He speaks of yogurt as both artifact and witness: a companion to nomads, a healer in folk medicine, a staple in poetry and proverbs, a silent character in history’s long narrative.



Where Culture Meets Microbiology

If culture preserved yogurt for thousands of years, it is science that now celebrates it anew.

The modern probiotic revolution has transformed yogurt’s bacteria—*Lactobacillus*, *Streptococcus*, and their microscopic companions—into scientific celebrities.

What fascinates Dilsiz is how ancient instinct anticipated modern knowledge:

- The gut as the second brain
- The link between fermentation and immunity
- The intuitive use of yogurt in longevity traditions

Along the Yogurt Route, he observed communities where yogurt was not just food, but a ritual of well-being—longevity before longevity had a name.

“Yogurt,” he reflects,

“is both a cultural legend and a scientific superstar.”

It is the rare food that meets the future without cutting ties to its past.

The UNESCO Quest

Years ago, Dilsiz submitted a proposal for yogurt to be included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list—an intricate, deeply bureaucratic process that he compares with charming simplicity:

**“Applying to UNESCO is like fermenting yogurt:
it needs patience, science, culture... and a little miracle.”**

The file finally reached UNESCO eight months ago, and evaluation continues.

Yet, in Dilsiz's view, yogurt has already achieved what many heritage items dream of: global intimacy.

“Yogurt is now in every refrigerator on Earth,” he says. “Recognition is merely a formality.”

The recent acknowledgment of Turkish as a world cultural heritage language could, he believes, amplify yogurt's story. But he insists on nuance:

**“Saying yogurt is Turkish is not enough.
Yogurt was born from the Turks and embraced by the world.”**

It is not ownership he argues for, but origin—and the cultural generosity that comes with it.

A Heritage for Tomorrow

What does the future of the Yogurt Route look like?

For Dilsiz, it is a road that does not fade behind us but extends ahead—towards new dialogues in gastrodiploamacy, public health, and cultural identity.

His dream is modest yet expansive:

that yogurt be recognized not only for its Turkish roots but as a shared human heritage of nourishment and knowledge.

“Culture, science, humor... yogurt carries them all,” he says.

“And it has the perfect starter to keep growing.”



Photo attribution: yogurt photo designed by Freepik (www.freepik.com).



Nilgün Özsoy
ATAA UN Committee



Tarhana - A Soup That Nourishes Both Your Spirit and Your Digestive Health

Soup is not only a comforting option during colder months but also offers impressive nutritional benefits, helping immunity and digestion. Among healthy soups, Turkish Tarhana Soup stands out for its gut-friendly properties.

Tarhana Soup, a staple of Turkish cuisine, dates back around 1,000 years to nomadic Turks in Central Asia. Made from fermented and dried yogurt, wheat flour, and vegetables, it was designed to be nutritious and long-lasting. Introduced to Anatolia by migrating Turks, tarhana became a popular winter soup during the Ottoman era.

Tarhana is not only Turkish but also liked in the Balkans and Central Asia. Regions have their own ways—some sour, some sweet, depending on how long it ferments. It started as a poor man's soup but became respected. Soup is good for health because it has few calories, is full of nutrients, and helps you feel full and hydrated.

Tarhana is special because it is fermented, so it gives probiotics that are good for the gut. Yogurt in Tarhana gives protein, calcium, and helps digestion. Wheat flour adds energy and fiber. Vegetables like tomato, pepper, and onion give vitamins and antioxidants. Spices bring taste and can kill germs. Sometimes chickpeas and freekeh are added to more protein and minerals.

All these ingredients in Tarhana make it not just tasty but also good for health, especially for the gut. Tarhana is more than food; it is a tradition and a sign of community, passed through families for many generations. Eating Tarhana is a way to connect with old wisdom and culture. If you want better health and a happy gut, Tarhana soup is a good choice. It has probiotics, good ingredients, and a warming taste, making it a special soup to enjoy while taking care of yourself.



Tarhana is more than soup; it's a symbol of tradition, resilience, and community. Its centuries-old recipe has been passed down through generations, connecting families and cultures. Whether enjoyed at a family table or in a bustling city café, Tarhana brings people together and celebrates the wisdom of ancient food practices.

If you're looking to boost your health, support your gut, and savor a taste of history, Tarhana Soup is your go-to option. With its probiotic-rich profile, nourishing ingredients, and heartwarming flavor, it truly is the best soup for your gut microbiome—and a delightful way to care for yourself, one bowl at a time.





Alev Wieland

Share your favorite
healthy choice recipes:

president@ataa.org



Keto Soft Dinner Rolls (14)

Dry Ingredients

Almond flour- 1.5 cups (168g)

Coconut flour – 2 tbs

Dry yeast - 2 ¼ tsp

Coconut sugar – ½ tsp

Baking powder – 1 tsp

Eanthan gum – ¼ tsp

Salt - ½ tsp

Optional Italian herbs

Garlic powder

Oregano

Black pepper

Rosemary

Sesame seeds

Wet Ingredients

Lukewarm Water – ¼ cup

2 eggs

3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

2 oz cream cheese cut into cubes

1 egg white to brush top of the rolls

Olive oil

Tools needed

Food processor

Silicone spatula

Glass bowl for softening the cheeses

Baking sheet lined with parchment paper

Preparation

Yeast preparation:

Combine sugar, yeast and water

Stir and let it sit aside to foam



Pre-heat the oven to 400 deg F

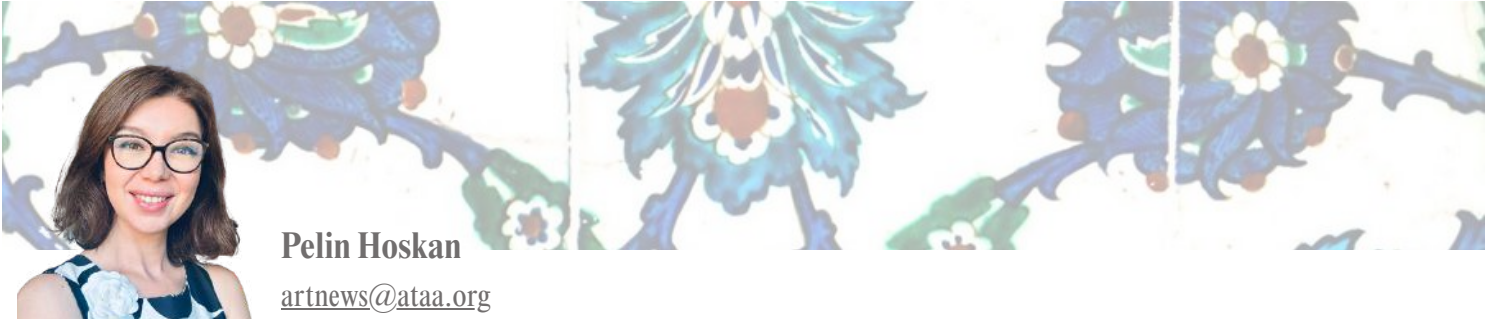
- Add cheeses into glass bowl, cover and soften them in microwave
- In food processor add all dry ingredients and optional spices and herbs, process to mix.
- Add eggs, yeast, softened cheese into food processor and process to form the dough, scraping sides
- Transfer dough into a oiled bowl cover and chill in refrigerator for 20 min.
- Take dough out of refrigerator
- Oil your hands
- Turn dough to oiled counter and cut it to 14 peaces
- Make a balls with each piece of dough, press the top slightly and place onto baking sheet
- You can also shape each piece like pretzel shape if you like.
- Brush rolls with egg white or olive oil
- Sprinkle top with optional mixed herbs
- Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown
- Cool rolls to let the cheese set

Storage:

- After rolls completely cooled, place paper towel inside of the glass lock dish, make sure it is long enough to cover over the rolls
- Place rolls into the dish, cover with paper towel and lock the lid in place
- Store in the refrigerator

Great to make sandwiches, with soups or anywhere you use bread, Enjoy!





Pelin Hoskan

artnews@ataa.org

December invites us to pause and revisit the stories that defined the year. However, with a calendar overflowing with brilliance and only so much room on the page, this retrospective turns its attention to the moments that resonated most deeply. Below, you'll find the news that most shaped the Turkish-American art scene in North America in 2025, along with the events and ideas poised to influence the art world in the year ahead, 2026.

MUSIC NEWS | ATA-DC Prepares to Host a World Renowned Virtuoso



In a cultural season already rich with anticipation, the ATAA component non-profit organization ATA-DC is set to present one of the most distinguished musical events of the year. On December 13, Washington will welcome Şefika Kutluer, the internationally celebrated flute artist whose performances have graced some of the world's most prestigious stages.

Kutluer's concert promises to be not just an evening of music, but an evening of connection, inspiration, and shared heritage.

Music career

"Şefika Kutluer has studied at Ankara State Conservatory for 10 years, advancing 4 grades, and graduated with honors and awards in 1979. She achieved her soloist career in Vienna and Rome. She taught at the Ankara Conservatory for several years. Receiving many international awards, she won the 1st prize in "International Flute Contest" in Vienna.

A Night of Elegance: Şefika Kutluer Comes to Washington

In a cultural season already rich with anticipation, the ATAA component non-profit organization ATA-DC is set to present one of the most distinguished musical events of the year. On December 13, Washington will welcome Şefika Kutluer, the internationally celebrated flute artist whose performances have graced some of the world's most prestigious stages.

Kutluer's arrival is more than a concert—it is a cultural moment. Her artistry has long resonated across continents, and her unique musical voice has shaped her into one of Turkey's most influential classical musicians. As the Turkish-American community prepares for this rare evening, there is a growing sense that the event will leave a meaningful imprint on the artistic landscape of the region.

As December 13 approaches, excitement builds not only for the beauty of her performance, but for the dialogue it creates—between traditions, between cultures, and across the Turkish-American artistic community.

After winning several international competitions and launching her truly international career as a soloist, she was awarded the presidential Medal in Türkiye, in 1985, the highest honor that country bestows on an individual, and in 1998 she became a "State Artist". She is known as the "Magic Flute" after the headline written by the New York Times' critics. Şefika Kutluer is the Flute Soloist at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

She received the "Golden Bravo Award", as the "Best Classical Performer, in Russia at the Bolshoi Theatre. And she performed with the Bolshoi Theatre Symphony Orchestra on April the 25th, 2023. She has performed several concerts, in innumerable countries in 5 continents, at many famous concert halls like; Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center in the USA, Bolshoi Theater, Tchaikovsky Hall, St. Petersburg Phil. Hall in Russia, Suntory Hall in Japan, Rudolfinum in Prague, joined International Music Festivals and received very favorable reviews."



Turquoise Echoes at Carnegie Hall

The second piece of music news worth spotlighting comes from our esteemed Assistant Professor of Organ at UTA, and founder and executive director of the Azerbaijan-American Music Foundation, Jamila Javadova-Spitzberg. She shared that the exceptionally gifted Azerbaijani pianist Nargiz Aliyarova, already celebrated for her artistry and accomplishments, is eager to collaborate with the wider Turkic world in future musical and cultural celebrations.

Nargiz Aliyarova's "Mosaic in Sound" brings the musical heritage of the Turkic world to New York's most storied stage

Some evenings at Carnegie Hall are more than performances—they are experiences in which music becomes a bridge between histories, cultures, and the shared memory of a people. On October 6, 2025 such a moment unfolded as Azerbaijani pianist and Honored Artist Nargiz Aliyarova illuminated the Weill Recital Hall with her extraordinary concert, "Turquoise: Mosaic in Sound."

Celebrating the 140th anniversary of the legendary composer Uzeyir Hajibayli, Aliyarova's program was a masterful journey through the rich and varied musical heritage of the Turkic world. The evening drew an audience of distinguished international guests, including diplomats and representatives from the Permanent Missions of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, and Kazakhstan to the United Nations, underscoring the concert's global significance.

As a professor, acclaimed pianist, and president of the National Music and Global Culture Society (NMGCS), Aliyarova curated an experience of exceptional refinement. Her performance wove together works by the most influential composers of the Turkic world, blending virtuosity with nuance, tradition with innovation, and history with present-day resonance. Each note seemed to carry centuries of heritage, transformed into a living, breathing celebration of sound.

The evening was a luminous testament to NMGCS's vision: to foster cultural dialogue through music, crafting moments in which sound becomes a universal language, capable of uniting hearts across borders. At Carnegie Hall, that vision was realized in an unforgettable performance that lingered long after the final note.



Kırmızı Mikrofon Makes History at “MEŞK: The Joy of Singing Together” Premiere in Istanbul



Written and produced by Nurten Meriçer and directed by Aylin Ünsal Yılmaz, the documentary “MEŞK: The Joy of Singing Together” brings to the screen the inspiring stories of Turkish Classical Music choirs from across Türkiye and around the world.

The film held its world premiere and gala screening on Sunday, November 16, 2025 at the iconic Grand Pera Emek Stage, with Grand Pera serving as the venue sponsor.

The premiere was an intimate celebration, attended exclusively by members of the press, dignitaries, and the choirs featured in the film. Guests shared the joy of singing together during the pre-screening foyer reception, echoing the central theme of the documentary: the unifying and healing power of collective music-making.

During the event, Nurten Meriçer delivered a moving speech on the importance of Turkish Classical Music choirs in preserving cultural heritage and enriching social life. She presented certificates of appreciation to choir conductors, musicians featured in the film, and supporting sponsors. Director Aylin Ünsal Yılmaz then addressed the audience, expressing how witnessing these choirs perform had once again revealed “the healing power of singing together.”



Among the many ensembles featured from around the world, a special distinction went to Kırmızı Mikrofon, the only U.S.-based choir participating in the documentary.

Represented by chorister Fatma Streett, their performance of “Virginia yollarından ses versem gelirmisin” captured the audience’s attention, drawing the only spontaneous applause of the evening. This moment marked a significant milestone for American ambassadors of Turkish Classical Music, bridging continents through the shared language of song.

Following this landmark premiere, Kırmızı Mikrofon continues its musical journey with upcoming concerts in North Carolina on March 14 and Virginia on May 9. Simultaneously, a U.S. edition of the Meşk project, led by TACAV, is in development.

This initiative aims to bring together Turkish choirs across the country, allowing audiences nationwide to experience the timeless harmony and cultural richness of Turkish Classical Music.



A Masterful Storyteller, Nebil Özgentürk



Nebil Özgentürk is widely regarded as one of Türkiye's most influential and celebrated documentarians. A masterful storyteller, he brings the nation's recent Republican history to life with striking depth, emotional resonance, and cinematic precision. Through meticulous research and an instinct for uncovering overlooked human stories, he gathers fragile moments, forgotten emotions, and hidden footprints that shaped modern Türkiye—crafting films that feel less like documentaries and more like living chronicles of a nation's soul. Today, Özgentürk stands as a visionary custodian of memory, preserving what might otherwise fade with time.

As the Turkish-American community grows across North America, we are presented with both an opportunity and a responsibility: to preserve, nurture, and celebrate a vibrant Turkish heritage for generations to come. This makes it essential to build our own platforms for learning, storytelling, and cultural expression. The rich visual narratives in Nebil Özgentürk's work offer not only inspiration but also a powerful window into our shared history. By embracing and amplifying these stories, we ensure that the people, moments, and values shaping Turkish identity are remembered, understood, and carried into the future. Through these efforts, we foster appreciation, curiosity, and connection—passing on a legacy that future generations can celebrate and confidently make their own. A meaningful initiative for 2026 could be the creation of an annual cultural calendar within ATAA—one designed to bring our community together through curated documentary showcases. By organizing film screenings throughout the year, we can engage a broad and diverse audience while strengthening our shared cultural heritage.



January 15 – Celebrate Nazım Hikmet's 105th birthday with a documentary screening in his honor. (Nazım Aramızda)



March 8 – Mark International Women's Day



October 29 – Commemorate Republic Day by screening the Atatürk Belgeseli named Cumhuriyetin İlk Duracı İzmit



Turkic Language celebrations – Highlight the richness of our linguistic and literary traditions with the documentary on Yaşar Kemal's life.

Nebil Özgentürk has crafted these documentaries with remarkable care, drawing from the most respected and reliable sources. His films offer our community—one that seeks the light of authentic history—an inspiring and accessible way to connect with our roots, deepen cultural understanding, and celebrate the stories that continue to shape us. This selection is the first we believe can truly speak to our community when brought to the screen.

Mr. Özgentürk's films feature many more of the most respected figures of our cultural and intellectual heritage — including our esteemed Nobel Prize-winning scientist Professor Aziz Sancar, as well as the profound musical and literary legacy of Zülfü Livaneli, among many others. Their stories deepen the emotional and historical richness of the narrative, making these documentaries not only informative but truly invaluable for our community.



ATAA Arts Committee 2026 Strategy

The ATAA Arts Committee Strategy sets a clear direction for strengthening cultural expression, supporting artists, and expanding community engagement through the arts. It outlines focused priorities to guide decision-making, partnerships, and sustainable program growth.

Vision

To elevate Turkish arts, culture, and creative expression across the United States, strengthening cultural pride, unity, and visibility within the broader community.

Mission

To support Turkish artists, promote cultural heritage, and create meaningful arts experiences that connect, inspire, and represent the Turkish-American community.

Strategic Pillars & Commitments for 2026

1. Cultural Presence & Visibility

Arts Commitment: Expand the reach and recognition of Turkish arts in mainstream U.S. cultural spaces.

2026 Actions:

- Build partnerships with museums, galleries, universities, and cultural centers.
- Promote and support exhibitions featuring Turkish artists.
- Organize guided museum visits around the country beginning with NY World Turkish Language Family Day.

2. Signature Annual Arts Programs

Arts Commitment: Establish strong, repeatable cultural programs that become hallmark ATAA arts traditions.

2026 Actions:

- Launch annual museum tour series in major U.S. cities.
- Host “Turkish Art Spotlight” events celebrating both contemporary creators and traditional arts.

3. Artist Empowerment & Collaboration

Art Commitment: Provide platforms and support Turkish and Turkish-American artists to thrive.

2026 Actions:

- Facilitate artist networking opportunities and collaborative projects.
- Connect U.S. cultural institutions with artists from Türkiye.
- Offer visibility through ATAA communications, events, and community showcases.
- Create ATAA Component Organizations artists database and include their involvement in the programs.

4. Community Engagement & Education

Arts Commitment: Build stronger community connections through accessible arts experiences.

2026 Actions:

- Develop workshops, webinars, and family-friendly cultural programs.
- Engage youth through interactive art activities tied to Turkish heritage.
- Use digital channels to share artist stories and cultural content.
- Utilize ATAA USA Magazine Arts News to educate community and highlight Turkish arts and artists

5. Partnerships, Funding & Sustainability

Arts Commitment: Ensure long-term growth and stability of ATAA arts programs.

2026 Actions:

- Pursue sponsorships, grants, and collaborative funding opportunities.
- Build cross-community partnerships to broaden participation.
- Establish structured planning and reporting for annual arts initiatives.

6. Cultural Heritage Preservation

Arts Commitment: Protect, honor, and celebrate the richness of Turkish artistic and cultural traditions.

2026 Actions:

- Promote arts tied to the Turkish language, history, and cultural identity.
- Integrate arts programming into ATAA-wide cultural and educational efforts.
- Highlight traditional arts alongside modern artistic expressions.





Mehmet Taşcıoğlu
Youth Committee Chair
ataayouthcom@gmail.com

Dear Friends, On behalf of our Vice Chair Bora Özalp, Secretary İlayda Yeni, and all committee members, we are proud to report that the ATAA Youth Committee has been actively and effectively engaged in planning programs, conducting research, and organizing panels to advance Turkish American youth advocacy throughout 2025!

For those who are new, the ATAA Youth Committee's mission is for members to act as model Turkish Americans and preserve the Turkish heritage and culture through various activities while giving back to our community. We want to empower and unite our fellow Turkish American youth with our projects that span the nation.



Joining the Youth Committee

If you are a Turkish American in high school or college, we welcome you to join the ATAA Youth Committee!
Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.

When you join the ATAA Youth Committee as a student, you receive opportunities to:

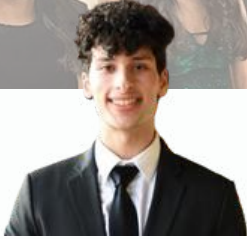
- Plan nationwide webinars and celebrations
- Coordinate large-scale research projects
- Volunteer on meaningful initiatives
- Build a network of prominent Turkish American professionals
- Join a supportive group of friends and future colleagues!

Please apply here: <https://forms.gle/42cLc36GgRTQTEbB9>



[Website](#)





Mehmet Taşcıoğlu
Youth Committee Chair
ataayouthcom@gmail.com

ATAA Youth Committee Survey: ATAA Across Cultures on Campus Research

The ATAA Youth Committee is launching a new research study on Turkish Student Engagement!

Following the ERA Plan Presentation at the 2023 ATAA Conference, the ATAA Youth Committee (YC) aims to expand on the initiative by focusing on the “Educate” pillar through new research exploring the values and expectations of Turkish and Turkish-American university students.

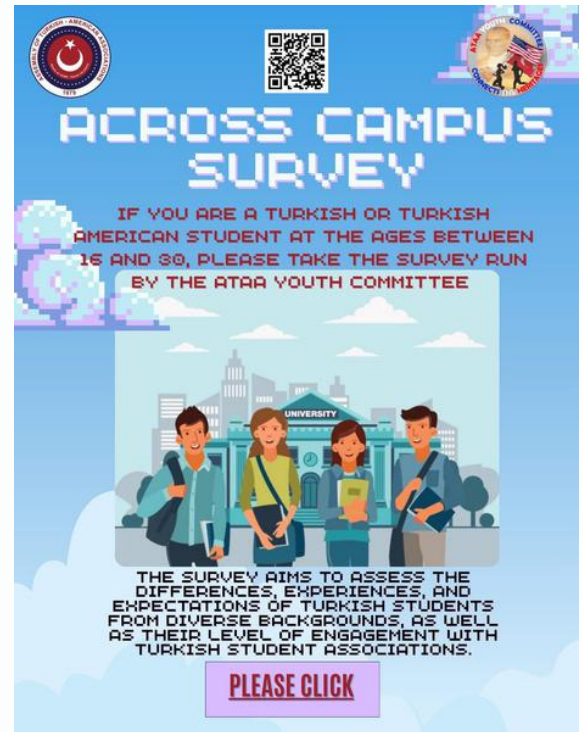
This project builds upon our previous successful research study, “Generational Experiences as Turkish Americans,” which was published in May 2025.

The primary objective of this research study is to explore the following questions and identify how responses may differ between Turkish and Turkish-American university students:

- 1) What do students seek in Turkish Student Associations (TSAs) and other community organizations?
- 2) How do expectations differ based on birthplace and early socialization?
- 3) Which programs or initiatives demonstrate the highest levels of engagement?
- 4) What values are considered most important among each group?

This research study is currently open and will be open for the rest of 2025! To qualify, you must be a Turkish or Turkish American student between the ages of 16 and 30. Please send the survey to friends/family/contacts you may know!

Survey Link: <https://forms.gle/u9HwXFz3HRitvecN9>



Upcoming Events

In addition to the ATAA Research Survey - Turkish Student Engagement, the ATAA Youth Committee will soon be announcing our next webinar! We look forward to welcoming you to our upcoming events and continuing to engage with our community.

Stay Connected with the ATAA Youth Committee



“[ataayouthcom](https://www.instagram.com/ataayouthcom)”

sites.google.com/view/ataayouthcommittee





Yücel Burdurlu

ATAA Secretary & Membership Chair
membership@ataa.org



**SIP, SPEAK, CELEBRATE
AND BECOME ATAA MEMBER!
OUR COFFEE AND LANGUAGE HERITAGE AWAITS**

December is shaping up to be a great month for Turkish Communities worldwide.

In addition to celebrating December 5th as Turkish Coffee Day, UNESCO has officially recognized the Turkish language as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity, to be commemorated globally as World Turkic Language Day. This decision will enhance the international recognition of the Turkish language - a shared value of the Turkic world - and will further strengthen the cultural connections among Turkish-speaking communities around the globe.

ATAA and its component organizations supported this meaningful day by organizing programs to highlight its importance under its United Nations Committee since 2021 to demonstrate the ATAA's commitment to promote Turkish Language and culture on the international stage. Thus, UNESCO Turkey National Commission approved the use of their Logo by ATAA for its December 4th, 2025, program titled "World Turkic Language Family Day" to be held in the Turkish House in New York. You are all invited if you happen to be in the neighborhood!

Dear fellow Turkish Americas, become a member of ATAA now, join our vibrant community and have your voice heard globally.

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Kids are having fun at the Cincinnati Turkish American Association (CTAA) Republic Ball



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**Turkish Coffee
Makers**

20
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Year Anniversary

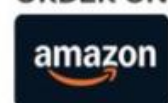


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K. Atatürk



ASSEMBLY OF TURKISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS

ASSEMBLY OF TURKISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS (ATAA)

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(Alev Wieland, ATAA President, UN Committee Chair)



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