

Bosnia and Herzegovina - Turkey Relations: Aid Perspective

Engin Akçay

Turgut Özal University, Ankara, Turkey

eakcay@turgutozal.edu.tr

Turkey's existence in Balkans dates back to centuries. As of this long historical background Turkey has still strong ties with the Balkan countries in general and particularly the population that are described as friend and / or relative communities. In this respect, Bosnia and Herzegovina has a special place in Turkish approach not only in terms of foreign policy but also public point of view. Resulting from its crucial importance, Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been a preferential region by Turkish decision-makers and considered one of the highest priorities of Turkish aid policy. Turkey, which is a re-emerging donor and power at the region, tries to use the assistance factor as a diplomacy instrument. Therefore this paper does mainly focus on the role of Turkish aid in the bilateral relations. By summarizing the cooperation and aid affairs at the late Ottoman period, the article rather enlightens the post - independence years of the country. While the study aims to briefly touch on the theoretical aspect of aid instrument on one hand, it also scrutinizes both the characteristics and the effectiveness of Turkish aid, on the other hand. When the past two decade is taken into consideration, no doubt that Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) has put an appearance as the institutional base for Turkish assistance. As TİKA has officially been declared the national coordinator agency for Turkish foreign assistance by 2005, TİKA's role is analysed under the selected aid activities. By using these prominent examples, the article tends to reflect their impact to bilateral relations and the perception in Bosnia and Herzegovina in this context. How efficient was the Turkish aid to the country and what should be done for a better cooperation are the basic problematic areas to be handled. In order to contribute to the on-going altruistic efforts so far, the paper points out a set of ideas which may give concrete results in optimizing the current affairs.

Keywords: Aid Policy, Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina, TİKA, Turkey.