

## ASSOCIATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AT OSCE ACADEMY IN BISHKEK

Tamás Kozma

### Project's working title:

Turkmen Natural Gas in the European Energy Security Discourse: Perceptions, Outlooks, Realities

### Author's short bio:

Tamás Kozma heads the Asian and African Relations Office of the Antall József Knowledge Centre, in Budapest, Hungary. Also he is a doctoral candidate in Geopolitics at the University of Pécs. Obtained his BA and MA degrees in International Relations at the Corvinus University of Budapest, his undergraduate and graduate theses revolved around the Russian-Armenian relations, and Central Asia's hydropower issues, respectively. His primary research interest is energy geopolitics in Turkey, South Caucasus, Central Asia, and in the broader Middle East. His doctoral dissertation is focusing on Turkey's energy policy aspirations, its participation in international energy projects, and its energy-based cooperation with different countries. Tamás Kozma's articles are published by the Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, by Turkish Policy Quarterly, and also by a number of Hungarian journals and textbooks.

### Research description:

The proposed research project '*Turkmen Natural Gas in the European Energy Security Discourse: Perceptions, Outlooks, Realities*' revolves around the European Union's (EU) unwavering interest in introducing Turkmen natural gas into its supplies, and the planned paper aims to offer an overview of the implications of this particular energy nexus. In order to provide a comprehensive picture on the above matter, the research plan is based on three main aspects. **First**, the question of EU-Turkmenistan gas relations need to be assessed in the context of the European Union's official energy security discourse, and in the framework of the EU's diversification endeavours, in particular. While the EU seeks to introduce new suppliers into its energy security architecture, export diversification is a strategic necessity for Turkmenistan for reducing its dependence on its current buyers, and such alignment of interests undoubtedly creates ground for scholarly interest in this particular question. It is imperative that in terms of direct EU-Central Asia gas relations, results have remained limited so far to the operation of assistance projects and the facilitation of an active policy dialogue among the parties. The most important milestones of this cooperation will be reflected in the paper. **Second**, the profound transformation Turkmenistan's natural gas export structure has been undergoing in the past decade needs to be scrutinised. The identification of these relevant changes in Turkmenistan's gas export is essential for the further contextualization of the research question, as these events affect the broader, regional energy security dynamics, and the potential EU-Turkmenistan gas relations should be viewed in the light of these developments. A pivotal point of this research should be that it is not possible to assess the EU-Turkmenistan gas relations without paying attention to the dependencies and interdependencies among all involved parties – such as Turkmenistan, other Central Asian countries, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, the European Union, and China – in the web of regional energy relations. **Third**, the research project seeks to offer a reality check on

the future chances of EU-Turkmenistan gas relations and to shed light on the possible policy options aiming at bringing the mutual interest in export and import diversification into fruition. In this regard, the political, legal, economic and infrastructural prerequisites should be analysed, as well as the factors hindering or supporting natural gas cooperation between the EU and Turkmenistan. The question of a potential Trans-Caspian Pipeline has to be given special focus, as the construction of such energy link has long been an indispensable element on the EU-Turkmenistan energy cooperation agenda.