

THE ROLE OF THE TURKISH-TATAR COMMUNITY IN DOBROUJA IN ROMANIAN-TURKISH CULTURAL RELATIONS (1990-2023)

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Abstract: This study analyses the importance of the Turkish-Tatar community in Dobruja in Turkish-Romanian bilateral relations from the 90's up to the present moment. It is often referred to as a bridge between these two countries, hence this paper aims to prove this point by presenting its cores, values and contribution to bilateral relations in the past three decades.

By explaining Türkiye's foreign policy in the Balkans and with the countries of the former Ottoman territory, the study underlines the importance given by Türkiye to this community in Dobruja. Thus, the visits of Turkish presidents or prime ministers to Romania over the years have solidified the collaboration between the two countries, and at the same time have given this community the opportunity to be in contact with what they consider to be their "motherland", through language, religion and history. In this manner, the contacts made on a cultural level between the two countries reveal this community's importance in Turkish-Romanian relations. Türkiye's support in the field of education or for the renovation of historical monuments of the common heritage through governmental organizations such as Diyanet, the „Yunus Emre" Cultural Institute and TİKA, is touched upon in this study.

Keywords: Romania; Türkiye; bilateral relations; cultural relations; foreign policy; Turks; Tatars; Dobruja

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