Middle Corridor: The most stable route for East-West trade

Representatives of the expert community of Azerbaijan agree that transport corridors running through the territory of the republic are safer and more economical than arteries bypassing the South Caucasus.

According to them, transport routes connecting Central Asia with Europe through Azerbaijan and Turkey are of strategic importance not only for the South Caucasus but also for the entire Turkic world. The experts stressed that any projects excluding Azerbaijan would not be in the interests of the Turkic-speaking countries as a whole.

In a conversation with Anadolu, Telman Nusretoglu, head of the Center for Turkic-Islamic Studies, drew attention to the geostrategic significance of Azerbaijan, located on the Great Silk Road.

According to him, Azerbaijan is also located at the intersection of the East-West and North-South transport corridors. “In this regard, the importance of Azerbaijan is growing every day. Our country plays an important role in the issue of consolidation of the Turkic world. At the same time, the Trans-Caspian transport corridor should be considered in conjunction with the Zangezur corridor and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. All these routes passing through Azerbaijan are more convenient both in terms of cargo transportation and in terms of cost,” Nusretoglu said.

In turn, the chairman of the Caucasus Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies (QAFSAM) Araz Aslanli said that Azerbaijan has always been at the forefront of the revival of the historical Silk Road, and has also taken serious steps in implementing important transport projects through Turkey and Central Asia to China.

“After the 2nd Karabakh war, the issues of the Zangezur corridor and the establishment of peace in the Caucasus came to the fore. And in this regard, the Caucasus and Trans-Caspian communication seems to be the most economical, hopeful and stable network compared to the one that will pass through the north and south of the Caucasus. When assessing the crisis situation between Russia and Ukraine and the problems in Iran’s relations with the West, transport links between the Caucasus and Central Asia through the Caspian stand out as the most efficient both in terms of customs, and in terms of security and speed,” Aslanli said.