

# Populari: Political romance between BiH, Turkey not bringing great results

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## ANALYSES

Deeply rooted in interpersonal historical and cultural links, the bilateral relations between Turkey and BiH during the past several decades have grown to a romanticized and emotional linkage, not just friendly but brotherly, but on the economic level they aren't contributing results, says the organization Populari in a report on BiH-Turkey relations, Patria reports.



File Photo

**SARAJEVO:TBT News Desk**—In its newest report, the think tank Populari, which is supported by the Balkan Trust for Democracy of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMFUS), poses the question of whether something greater than political flirtation exists in these relations.

"Given the ever greater political and economic significance of Turkey on the global and regional scene, development of good cooperation of BiH with such a strong friend definitely deserves special attention," the report states.

But according to the Populari report, titled "Political Romance: Relations between Turkey and BiH," the links that often are represented as idyllic on the side of politicians of both countries, in reality have not created significant results.

Focusing on the cultural, political, and economic aspects of these relations, Populari's analysis shows that, contrary to claims of Turkish officials that they cooperate equally, their activities are significantly more present in the Federation, and more expressed in cooperation with Bosniaks.

"Despite this unequal approach, all BiH politicians greet the numerous Turkish investments in renovating the Ottoman cultural heritage. Judging by their frequent statements, for more than ten years they have been especially interested in strengthening economic links through improving trade and increasing Turkish investment in BiH – and in fact, in this segment, there is the greatest gulf between rhetoric and practice," Populari said in its analysis.

Excluding donations, Turkey between 1994 and 2012 was in ninth place in total value of investments in BiH, behind Switzerland and the Netherlands, who are not calling for special links with BiH.

"This shows that in the economy and generally in the business world, history, love and friendship don't play a special role, even if this is about a friendly country like Turkey. Instead of relying on brotherhood and waiting for Turkey to take the first step, BiH should develop a clear and contemporary framework of foreign relations, to start undertaking active measures for improving the business climate, and establish clear priorities that the BiH economy will use," concludes the Populari report.

