

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CASPIAN SEA REGION OIL-NATURAL GAS EXPORT PIPELINES FOR THE CASPIAN SEA COASTAL COUNTRIES AND TURKEY SUMMARY

The Caspian Sea, in terms of the importance of economic and biological reserves, has a privileged location among the world seas. There are Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan on the coast of the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan gained their independence after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Areas of new challenges have emerged in the Caspian Sea region with the Soviet Union's disintegration. The causes of the great struggle are the region's rich oil-natural gas resources and the transportation ways of these resources to world markets passing through the region. The Caspian Sea coastal countries want to own, use and export rich oil-natural gas resources to profit most for themselves. These ambitions cause problems in the legal sharing of the Caspian Sea and this leads to a deadlock. Undetermined legal status of the Caspian Sea has negative impact on investors. Despite the entire search for alternative energy, oil and natural gas will remain important in the 21st century, too. World countries, through their own interests, will try to possess or keep under control of the oil-natural gas resources, or at least the transportation lines. In the world energy scene decorated in this manner, the role of the Caspian Sea region is growing important. The region considered as a second Gulf of Basra in the 21st century and being the natural gas potential more remarkable than the oil potential prove the growing importance. Because the Caspian Sea region lacks direct connection to open seas, region oil and natural gas exportations are to be carried out by pipelines. There are existent and planned pipelines passing through several countries to export these resources. The importance of the Caspian Sea region oil-natural gas export pipelines for the Caspian Sea coastal countries overlaps at some points but also differentiates at some. In general; Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan see the pipelines as vital elements to strengthen their independence and economies. On the other hand, Iran and Russia's desire is to establish control over the pipelines. Therefore, they oppose developing external forces in the region. The importance of the Caspian Sea region oil-natural gas export pipelines for Turkey is evaluated in terms of various aspects. If Turkey's increasing energy needs and export dependence are taken into first consideration, how important that region pipelines passing through Turkey are will be seen better. Becoming an east-west and north-south axis energy bridge, Turkey will enhance political, economic, diplomatic and military power in the international arena. In addition, the effect of the region energy export pipelines to Turkey maritime transportation should not be underestimated. In this study, the importance of the Caspian Sea region oil-natural gas export pipelines for the Caspian Sea coastal countries and Turkey is evaluated and the effect of these pipelines to Turkey maritime transportation is indicated. In preparation period, domestic-foreign books, articles, magazines of research centers, annual reports of public-private sectors and internet resources are used in the means of literary search. Obtained data is resolved and interpreted. In this sense, Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan are introduced generally in the second chapter of the study. In the third chapter, the problem of the Caspian Sea legal status is explained in general terms and considerations of coastal countries on the issue are indicated. In the fourth chapter, detailed information is given about oil-natural gas resource amounts in the world and in the Caspian Sea region, and then existent-planned export pipelines. In the fifth chapter, the importance of the Caspian Sea region oil and natural gas export pipelines for the Caspian Sea coastal countries and Turkey is stated and the effect to Turkey maritime transportation is examined. In the final chapter of the study, significant results are reached and proposals are given in the light of all information.