

Summary

Paraguay is a country where both Spanish and Guarani are spoken. Using both languages is related to the formation of the Paraguayan identity. When the Spanish first arrived in these lands, there were no conflicts with the indigenous people, as in some other Latin American countries. On the contrary, they peacefully intermarried with the Guarani natives. The cultural synthesis that emerged from this union forms the basis of today's Paraguayan identity. This situation has transformed the Paraguayan people into peaceful, hard-working people with a deep love for nature.

Paraguay was not sufficiently represented in Türkiye for a while. However, this cooperation is now developing day by day. In addition to the activities of the embassy, there are many young Paraguayans receiving education in Türkiye.

The relations between Türkiye and Paraguay have a history of over 70 years. These relations gained significant momentum with the visit of the President of Türkiye, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to Paraguay in 2018. Thanks to this historic visit, a Turkish Embassy was opened in Paraguay, and the Paraguayan Embassy in Türkiye began operating in February 2019.

Since then, there have been important visits between the two countries, both at the state level and in terms of individual relations. As of today, Türkiye is a well-known country in Paraguay. Moreover, this recognition is not only at the academic level; it is also realized through literature and the media.

Paraguay - Türkiye Relations: Historical, Cultural and Tourism Ties.

Ceferino Valdez PERALTA - Ambassador of Paraguay in Türkiye

Paraguay is a country where both Spanish and Guarani are spoken. The reason for using both languages goes back to the roots of Paraguayan identity. When the Spanish first arrived in these lands, there were no conflicts with the indigenous people, as in some other Latin American countries. On the contrary, when they reached the current capital Asunción, instead of fighting, they intermarried with the Guarani natives. The cultural synthesis that emerged from this union forms the basis of our current Paraguayan citizenship. This situation has made the Paraguayan people peaceful, hardworking and deeply loving towards nature.

Later, different missionary groups consisting of Franciscans, Jesuits and mercenaries came to the region. These groups were part of the structure known as the "Jesuit Communities". In order to understand that period and the relations between the native people and the missionaries, the movie "The Mission" can be recommended. This movie reflects the arrival of the Spanish to the region, their relations with the native people and the evangelization process in a very impressive way. Indeed, the most important thing for the society is to be able to live together in peace.

Paraguay was not sufficiently represented in Türkiye for a while. However, these ties and collaborations are getting stronger every day. In addition to the activities of the embassy, there are many Paraguayan youth receiving education in Türkiye. Thanks to these mutual relations, Türkiye also has the chance to learn more about Paraguay. Because Türkiye-Paraguay relations have a history of over 70 years. These relations gained significant momentum with the visit of the President of Türkiye, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to Paraguay in 2018. Thanks to this historic visit, a Turkish Embassy was opened in Paraguay, and the Paraguayan Embassy in Türkiye began operating in February 2019. Since then, important visits have taken place between the two countries, both at the state level and in terms of individual relations. For example, the visit of the Türkiye-Paraguay Parliamentary Friendship Commission to Paraguay and the contacts carried out at the commission level are very valuable. In addition, the ministers of sports and culture and various members of parliament from Paraguay have paid official visits to Türkiye. As is known, evaluation meetings are held between the states at certain periods in political, economic, cultural and other areas. Meetings between Türkiye and Paraguay are also held regularly every year.

As of today, Türkiye is a well-known country in Paraguay. Moreover, this recognition is not only at the academic level; it is also realized through literature and the media. Turkish TV series and novels are very popular in Paraguay. The first question many people who come to Paraguay ask is, "Where are popular TV series or the latest movies shot?" As a reflection of this interest, a group of famous Turkish TV series actors will also visit Paraguay in the near future. There are also similarities between the cultures of Paraguay and Türkiye. For example, one of the traditional dishes of Paraguay, "Chipaguazú" or known as "Çorba" among the public, is actually very similar to some local dishes made with corn in the Black Sea region. The dish called "Alinazik" by the Turks is almost the same as the Paraguayan dish "Polenta". Paraguay's most traditional dessert is also very familiar to the Turks: "Sütlü". Such common flavors facilitate cultural rapprochement.

There are currently 7 Paraguayan students studying in cities such as Izmir, Istanbul, Samsun, Eskisehir and Canakkale. These students never feel alone in Türkiye. Although it may seem like an obstacle at first, the language difference can be overcome in a short time. Paraguayan students easily adapt to society by learning Turkish in a short period of time such as 3-4 months. Similarly, Turkish citizens can start speaking Spanish within three months when they go to Paraguay.

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The reason why the origin of the Paraguayan identity is mentioned is the closeness with Turkish culture. In this context, Guarani is not only a language for Paraguay, but also a cultural heritage. Turkish also has a nasal-laryngeal pronunciation. Guarani also draws attention with this feature. For example, the word “water” in the Guarani language is pronounced with this exact nasal tone. Therefore, if you are of Turkish origin, it is not difficult to pronounce Guarani. Similarly, Paraguayans are quite prone to learning both Spanish and Guarani, and even Turkish.

Culturally, there are very special elements that unite Paraguay and Türkiye. One of the most important traditional handicrafts of Paraguay, “Ñanduti”, or “Lace Embroidery”, is also very similar to Turkish culture. But perhaps one of the most universal and unifying aspects of culture is sports. For Paraguayans, football is not just a sport, it is almost a way of life. Today, Paraguayan footballers also play in Türkiye. One of the most well-known names is Óscar Cardozo, whose nickname is “Tacuara (Big Cane)”. As can be seen, football also brings Paraguay and Türkiye together.

Intense efforts are being made to develop tourism between the two countries. For example, a festival promoting Türkiye was organized in Paraguay, and a Paraguayan Tourism Festival is planned to be held in Türkiye in the near future. Beyond all this, the most important thing is that the peoples get to know each other closely. For this reason, great importance is given to academic cooperation in order to increase the interest of both Paraguayan and Turkish students in getting to know each other's countries. The first thing that is needed is for the countries to get to know each other. Both countries have a strong tourism infrastructure. In addition, the visa requirement between the two countries has been lifted. Increasing the flights from Turkish Airlines to Asunción is on the agenda. Direct flights between Istanbul, Madrid and Asunción have been launched as of May 12, 2025. Of course, the most valuable promotion is for individuals who visit the countries to share their impressions and experiences. The cities most visited by Paraguayan tourists in Türkiye are Istanbul, Cappadocia and Izmir. For example, Izmir is usually visited to visit the House of the Virgin Mary. Because most of the Paraguayan people are Catholic. However, Türkiye has countless beauties worth seeing. There is a magnificent church just a few steps away from Cappadocia University. This cliché is admirable with its art, workmanship and history. Such places also need to be promoted. A cooperation agreement has been signed between the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Paraguayan Ministry of Tourism, and work in this direction is ongoing.

There are also important opportunities for the two countries to

cooperate in the field of agriculture. There are products and technologies from Türkiye that can greatly benefit the Paraguayan people. Paraguay is also a strong country in agriculture and animal husbandry. Many agricultural products such as rice, soybeans and sesame are exported to Türkiye. On the other hand, Türkiye's agricultural machinery is extraordinary. If Türkiye's food products reach Paraguay and Turkish agricultural entrepreneurs start production in Paraguay, the country's production could double in three years. Despite its population of 7 million, Paraguay can produce enough food for 100 million people. Paraguay has fertile lands, clean water resources, a renewable energy infrastructure, and a young population that is hardworking and eager to learn.

Conclusion

In fact, these two peoples are very similar to each other. They can find many common points and carry out beautiful projects together. For example, there are steps taken to establish cooperation between the University of Cappadocia and the University of San Sebastián in Paraguay. Not only Paraguay, but all Latin American countries offer open doors for Turks. Similarly, Turks are not only hospitable, but also have an authentic and unique culture. The sincere love shown by Turks to Paraguayans, who love to reflect their history and culture, is proof of this. It is recommended to start working with Paraguay and establishing connections. Paraguay is a young country. 70% of its population is under the age of 30. The resources of the country with 7 million people are much greater. The country has two large hydroelectric power plants that produce clean energy.

17 April 2025**About the Author**

Ceferino Valdez PERALTA - *Ambassador of Paraguay in Türkiye*

1. STUDIES

- Law Degree. Graduated from the National University of Asuncion, Paraguay.
- Graduated from the Diplomatic and Consular Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay.
- Training courses in Chile, Japan and Switzerland.

2. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

(1974-1982) Protocol Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(1982-1983) Vice Director of Protocol

(1983-1986) First Secretary, Embassy of Paraguay in South Africa Charge d' affaires a.i., Embassy of Paraguay in South Africa.

(1986-1992) First Secretary, Embassy of Paraguay in the United States of America

(1992-1994) Deputy Permanent Representative to the American States Organization

(January 20, 1994) Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the UN, New York. Charge d' affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of Paraguay to the UN State's Ceremonial Director

(August 21, 1996) Coordinator of the "White Helmets Initiative" of the United Nations, with Ambassador degree.

(April 28, 1997) Ambassador of the Republic of Paraguay in the Republic of China (Taiwan)

(November 7, 2003) General Director of Bilateral Political Affairs.

Board of Qualification, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Delegate to the Trinational Commission of the Pilcomayo River.

Member of the Committee of Revitalization of the Railways.

(December 11, 2007 ~ 2015) Ambassador of Paraguay in the Republic of Korea

(January, 2012 ~ 2015) Dean of Latin American Region

(January, 2013 ~ 2015) Dy. Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

(2015 ~ 2016) President of the Association of Diplomats of the Republic of Paraguay

(2015~2017) Member of the Directorate of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Paraguay

(Aug.~Dec. of 2017) Liaison to the Honorable National Congress of the Republic of Paraguay

(December, 2017 ~) Director General of Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

3. DECORATIONS AND DISTINCTIONS

- "Grito de Ipiranga" Order, in Official degree State of Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- "Condor de los Andes" Order, in Official degree, Republic of Bolivia.
- "Orden Nacional del Mérito" in the degree of Gran Cruz, Republic of Ecuador.
- "Estrella Brillante" Order, in the Gran Cordon degree, Republic of China.
- "Comendador" Legion of Honor, Republic of France.
- "Gran Cruz", Republic of Argentina.
- "Comunicaciones" Medal, granted by the Commander in Chief of Armed Forces of the Republic of Paraguay.
- "Honor al Mérito" Diploma, Federation of Public Officers of Paraguay.
- "Fundador" Badge, Corps of Volunteer Firemen of Paraguay.
- "Fundador" Medal, from the World Federation of Volunteer Firemen. Tokyo, Japan.
- "Knight of the Month" Award, September 1989 and "Al Servicio Distinguido" Orden de Caballeros de Colón, Washington D.C., United States of America.
- "Vivian" Award of the National Press Centre of Washington D.C, United States of America.
- "Huesped Ilustre" of the city of Tarija, Bolivia.
- "Ciudadano de Honor" of the city of Itakyry, Republic of Paraguay.
- "Ciudadano de Honor" of the city of San Juan Nepomuceno, Republic of Paraguay.
- Honorary Citizen, Songpa City, Republic of Korea.

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Throughout history, shaping the perceptions of societies has been one of the most fundamental elements of domestic and foreign policy. As the nation-state structure became widespread and nation-states emerged as the main actors in international relations, public diplomacy along with traditional diplomacy began to play a crucial role in shaping these relations.

Diplomatic relations between states are conducted by diplomats, including ambassadors and consuls. These diplomats also engage in public diplomacy, which serves a vital function in interstate relations. Public diplomacy activities have a significant impact not only on the citizens of a state but also on its leaders. Public diplomacy plays a pivotal role in shaping the relations between states alongside other diplomatic activities.

The aim of the project Public Diplomacy in Foreign Policy conducted in collaboration with Cappadocia University and Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM) is to discuss the principles for implementing public diplomacy, identify key activities and highlight public diplomacy efforts undertaken by foreign diplomats in Türkiye. The ultimate goal is to contribute to shaping Turkish Foreign Policy and influencing decision-making processes.

For detailed information about the project;
<https://commonhorizon.kapadokya.edu.tr/> You can reach us from the address.

Prof. Dr. Şafak OĞUZ

Prof. Dr. Şafak OĞUZ became an Associate Professor in 2019 and a full Professor in 2024. He retired in 2021 after 23 years of service in the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). During his time there, he also worked for the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). His expertise lies in Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism (WMD), International Security, International Organizations and Peace and Conflict Studies. Prof. Dr. Şafak OĞUZ currently serves as the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences at Cappadocia University. He is fluent in English and German.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin EROL

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin EROL graduated from the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University (BU) in 1993. After completing his Master's Degree at BU in 1995, he was accepted to the PhD program at BU in the same year. After completing his PhD at Ankara University in 2005, Prof. Erol became an Associate Professor in 2009 in the field of "International Relations" and a full Professor in 2014. His areas of expertise are "Geopolitics", "Crisis Management", "Security", "Turkish Foreign Policy" and "Central Asia".

Prof. Erol has published numerous scientific articles and books on these subjects. He is the author and editor of various journals such as Eurasia File, Black Sea Studies, Gazi Akademik Overview, Journal of Regional Studies, International Crisis and Political Studies and contributor for national radio-television programs such as TRT, A HABER, TV NET, CNN TÜRK and HABERTÜRK.

Prof. Erol, whose opinions have been published in Turkey's leading magazines and newspapers has been deemed worthy of many awards, including Writers and Artists Foundation of the Turkic World (TÜRKSAV) in 2007, "Turkish World Service Award" in 2015 and Writers' Union of Turkey (TYB) "Press-Intellectual Award".

Prof. Erol has lectured at Ufuk, Ankara and Gazi Universities. As a faculty member in the Department of Relations at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, he served as an expert, coordinator and founder president in Türkiye's leading think tanks (ASAM, SDE, GSAM, USGAM). He has been the founding chairman of Ankara Crisis and Politics Research Center (ANKASAM) since 2016.