



## HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL BASIS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

Traveling abroad for education and training purposes is the result of the internationalization of education, in other words, the spread of international educational activities. Even though the history of the internationalization of education within the scope of edification and missionary activities dates back to ancient times, from the methodological standpoint, the process began in the 18th century. After the Second World War, the process of the internationalization of education and the establishment of its legal framework accelerated under the leadership of the United Nations (UN). Henceforth, from this time onward an increase has been observed in education activities of both international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and individual states. In this period, when the United States and European countries take the leading positions, the internationalization process is mostly predominant in higher education. This study will give a general overview of the historical background and intellectual basis of international student mobility.

International student mobility is of great importance in terms of technological and scientific development and cultural exchange, apart from the individual sphere. Via international student mobility, there is an interstate and intercultural knowledge transfer. In this process, it is possible to develop existing knowledge, produce new information, and put it into the global circulation.

For centuries, international education has been profoundly affecting the religious, economic, political or cultural dimensions of relations between people, communities, and countries. The intellectual development of human civilization and its reflection in many areas have had a mass and institutional nature regarding education. Epistemological centers where information was re-produced also became centers of education. In this sense, centers of education such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Sparta, and Athens spanning from ancient times to the Hellenistic period were at the cutting edge.

During the age of empires, it was common practice that students brought from foreign countries were sent back to their countries after they had been raised to take leading roles as scientists or administrators. In the Ottoman Empire, the practice of preparing foreign students as scientists and rulers reached its peak, and particular attention was given to the issue of training qualified human resources for the needs of the central and provincial administration. During the 8th-13th centuries, Turkistan was an important epistemological center with its madrasahs and scientists and hosted many students from outside the region. Until the mid-19th century, a large number of students from Turkistan khanates were sent to Istanbul mainly to receive military training.

The shift in the global educational leadership towards Europe and the United States coincides with the modern period. Especially after

the Second World War, the scientific and cultural exchange between the countries started to be provided through education. In the 1960s, developed countries allocated educational scholarships to "assist" developing countries. The generally unilateral student mobility led to a brain drain. Then, the world entered a period of the Cold War, during which there were no large-scale violent conflicts but ideological polarization and confrontation as it is known from its name. During this period, the states at the opposite poles tried to attract international students to their countries through various scholarship programs. The main purpose was to enable international students who completed their education to return to their countries and be involved in ideological propaganda and military containment policy against the other pole.

With the end of the bipolar world system, the changes brought by globalization led to the internationalization of higher education and increased competition in this field. Rising global competition, innovation demands, new markets, and production options further emphasized the importance of the information society that produces information, technology, and services.

The end of the Cold War marked not only the end of the ideological war but also changed the nature of power. The concept of soft power, first introduced by Joseph Nye, implies the power of influencing other countries with the diplomatic infrastructure of a country, the quality and capacity of education, its business attractiveness, as well as culture and cultural products. Today, international student mobility has become an important tool of cultural diplomacy, which is a critical instrument of soft power in the foreign policy decision-making process. It is noteworthy that developed countries try to strengthen their position in the international system by attracting students from different parts of the world, while developing countries make it clear that they are also present in the global system through international students. International student mobility offers states significant political, economic, and cultural opportunities, given the increasingly complex and interdependent relations.

Although the importance of political concerns seems to have lessened in the post-Cold War era, there are new actors in the global system, as well as currency, trade, and financial wars, with economic repercussions being felt all over the world. Taking into account the fact that international students had an impact of \$40 billion on the U.S. economy in 2019 alone, it can be said that apart from the specified sectors, international education has also reached a considerable global level. According to post-Cold War modeling, economic and political concerns were more of a priority in international student mobility, while academic, cultural, and social highlights remained in the background. From another point of view, there is a network of interdependent and complex relationships between knowledge, power, and wealth. In his

book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Paul Kennedy explained how the economic and military powers have changed in the international arena since the 16th century. Looking at the history of humanity, we can see that societies and civilizations that had economic and political power were also epistemological centers. These centers, on the one hand, regulated and produced science, on the other hand, determined the direction of both economy and politics.

Epistemological centers stand out as the cores that create precedents today as in the past and offer first-hand methodological knowledge to the outside world. The gravitational force of these cores always reproduces information, collecting new precedents or paradigms from the environment, and strengthens their position in terms of both quality and quantity. Thus, the distance between core and periphery is widened. These interdependent and complex relations offer major opportunities, especially to the states that are epistemological centers. Education and its internationalization, which is a significant point in the knowledge transfer, are among the major factors that offer these opportunities.

In the current context of globalization, the opportunities and options of students to study abroad are increasing. On the other hand, the competition has also increased in admission processes to international scholarship programs. However, continuing demand for study abroad and government scholarship programs to develop qualified human resources of some developing countries lead to an increased number of international students. According to the 2019 data, the number of international students worldwide exceeded 6 million, 3.7 million of which are in the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation region. When looking at student mobility in terms of receiving and sending countries, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia are the most preferred countries, while China, India, and South Korea are among the top three countries that send students abroad.

To conclude, it is not surprising that approximately 42% of international student mobility is in the OECD region, which we can qualify as the core countries of the 21st century. Regarding China, India, and South Korea, the top three countries sending most students abroad, international student mobility obviously can bring positive results, taking into account the current economic, technological, and scientific development levels of these three countries. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that international student mobility poses risks such as brain drain and the increased gap between core and periphery, especially to underdeveloped countries that cannot provide their citizens with necessary social and economic conditions, including employment for qualified human resources who obtained their higher education abroad.

## Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- In accordance with the order of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, July 13, 2020, was declared the Day of National Mourning in Kazakhstan in memory of those citizens who died of the coronavirus infection. Flags were lowered throughout the country, and a moment of silence was observed at 12:00 pm Nur-Sultan time. President Tokayev paid tribute to the victims of the pandemic in front of the Akorda residence (Akorda, 13.07.2020).
- During his visit to Ukraine, Turkish National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar held talks with his Ukrainian counterpart Andriy Taran. The parties focused on the assessment of the security situation in the Azov-Black Sea region and the ways to respond to emerging threats. They also discussed prospects of bilateral military technical and military financial cooperation and issues related to Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, in particular, its recognition as NATO's Enhanced Opportunities Partner (Ukrinform, 13.07.2020).
- The armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan continue border clashes using heavy artillery and drones. During three days of hostilities, 11 Azerbaijani servicemen, including an army general, and four Armenian soldiers were reported killed. Hundreds of people gathered in Baku for a march in support of the Azerbaijani military and President Ilham Aliyev. The European Union, the United States, and Russia issued statements, urging de-escalation between the two South Caucasus neighbors (RFE/RL, 14.07.2020).
- The first high-level Central Asia – China meeting at the level of foreign ministers was held online. The parties addressed urgent international and regional issues, including cooperation in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigating its ramifications. As part of economic recovery measures, they vowed to further develop regional economic integration, trade and investments. The Chinese side expressed its readiness to provide “green” corridors for the Central Asian economies to ensure stable cross-border cargo shipments (Kazinform, 16.07.2020).
- Former head of the Joint Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan Akbar Yarbabaev was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to 11 years and six months in prison. His spouse Elena Yarbabaeva, convicted under the same article, received a six-year suspended sentence. The Yarbabaevs were detained a year ago on charges of spying for Russia. It is reported that about ten more employees of the State Security Service and the Ministry of Defense were put on trial in the same criminal case (Fergana, 17.07.2020).
- According to Afghan security agencies, the Taliban have not decreased attacks following the peace deal signed with the United States. Instead, the figures show an increase in violence by the movement as it conducted 5,943 attacks in January-June 2020, while the Afghan government forces, supported by foreign troops, held 1,569 operations against the Taliban. Consequently, the agreement remains unfulfilled in terms of reducing violence (TOLONews, 13.07.2020).

## Economy, Finance, and Energy

- The prime ministers of the Eurasian Economic Union member states attended a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council held in Minsk in a face-to-face format for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The parties discussed the elimination of trade barriers in their internal markets, agreed on systematic approaches to marking of goods, adopted a comprehensive plan to fight COVID-19 and other infections, and approved the interstate program on forming a joint earth remote sensing system (Eurasian Economic Commission, 17.07.2020).
- In the first half of 2020, Kazakhstan's light industry increased its production volume by 8%, with positive dynamics observed in the production of textiles, leather products and clothing. A total of 1,130 light industry enterprises, 97% of which are small businesses, operate in Kazakhstan and employ about 17,900 people, but the industry's share in the GDP is only 0.1%. The government supports the industry through implementing the roadmap for creating the cotton-textile cluster (Kazinform, 15.07.2020).
- Heads of transport authorities of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan held a video conference with officials responsible for foreign investments from China's State Committee for Development and Reforms. The parties discussed further practical measures to implement the project on the construction of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China railway. The focus of the talks was on the selection of a railway route from the three proposed options. Due to differing views on the most optimal route, the parties agreed to continue their discussions (UzDaily, 16.07.2020).
- According to Tajikistan's Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, the construction of the Tajik section of the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade (CASA-1000) project will be completed as scheduled by the end of 2021. India's Kalpataru Power Transmission Limited builds this section, and the coronavirus pandemic has not affected the construction process. To date, more than 30% of the necessary construction equipment has been delivered to Tajikistan (Asia-Plus, 15.07.2020).
- According to Kyrgyzstan's National Statistics Committee, the country's GDP in January-June 2020 amounted to 228.3 billion soms (\$2.97 billion), decreasing by 5.3% compared to the same period of last year. The GDP decline is mainly due to the reduction in the construction and services sectors that fell by 9.1% and 8.2%, respectively. At the same time, commodity production decreased only by 1.3% compared to the first half of 2019 (Kabar, 14.07.2020).
- Small and medium-sized enterprises in Russia appear to recover from the pandemic induced crisis as the number of vacancies in this sector in June 2020 increased by 20% year-on-year. After the end of self-isolation, small businesses posted 146,500 vacancies, which is 47% and 9% higher than in May and March 2020, respectively. Medium-sized businesses offered over 33,300 jobs, which is 46% and 1% higher than in May and March 2020, respectively (TASS, 15.07.2020).

## Society and Culture

- The University of Oxford hosted an international scientific symposium called “Al-Farabi: Life and Legacy” dedicated to the celebration of the 1150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the renowned Islamic philosopher and scientist Abu Nasr al-Farabi. Leading al-Farabi researchers from Germany, Kazakhstan, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States participated in the online event organized by the Embassy of Kazakhstan in the UK with the assistance of the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies (Zakon.kz, 19.07.2020).
- The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee of the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region was held via videoconference. The Uzbek side reported that additional 1.2 million hectares of forest were planted on the dried bottom of the Aral Sea during the winter-spring period, with 100 billion soums (\$9.8 million) allocated for this work. The committee approved new projects of the fund worth \$12.4 million, including the construction of a multipurpose hospital in the Moynoq district of Karakalpakstan (UzReport, 15.07.2020).
- The CIS Executive Committee hosted an online meeting of the working group on the development of the draft statute of the Virtual Museum of Cultural Heritage of the CIS member states. The group members finalized the draft and sent it to the CIS Council for Cultural Cooperation for review. The initiative to create the museum belongs to President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The project aims at combining the material cultural heritage of the CIS member states under a single virtual museum on the internet (CIS Executive Committee, 15.07.2020).
- In November/December 2021, the UNESCO will examine Ornek, the traditional Crimean Tatar ornament, for its possible inclusion in the representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The Crimean Tatar people understand the language of Ornek symbols and use items with ornamental messages on them in ritual and non-ritual activities. Currently, the overwhelming majority of Ornek artisans live in Crimea (Ukrinform, 16.07.2020).
- Well-known Egyptian theologian Khaled al-Saeed Ghanem, the director of the Department for Preaching Research of Egypt's Ministry of Awqaf, published a book titled “Abai's Instructions to the People of Kazakhstan” in Cairo. In the book written in Arabic, the Egyptian scholar explains the significance and philosophical meaning of Abai's “Book of Words”, his vision of national education issues, worldview, morality and law (MFA of Kazakhstan, 16.07.2020).
- Turkey delivered 11 tons of humanitarian aid by air to Kazakhstan, including medical masks, protective overalls, various drugs, thermometers, ventilators, PCR tests, oxygen concentrators and other necessary products and medicines necessary for treating patients infected with coronavirus. The assistance was organized by the Turkish government, the Kazakhstani foundation “Aidyn Nury”, the Ankara municipality, the Alumni Association of Akhmet Yassawi University and the Kazakh diaspora in Turkey (MFA of Kazakhstan, 14.07.2020).