



COMMON TURKIC HISTORY IS A SHARED HERITAGE OF THE TURKIC WORLD

The Turkic people sharing common ancestry began to achieve concrete results in the way of progress towards unity. This is evidenced by the fact that a new course called Common Turkic History began to be taught at schools of the member countries of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council). The textbook of this course was developed by the International Turkic Academy (ITA) and was approved and adopted by the Turkic Council and the ministries of education of those countries. Currently, 30,000 students in Turkey, 10,000 in Azerbaijan, and 15,000 in Kazakhstan are studying Common Turkic History as an elective course. The textbook, covering the period from the earliest times to the 15th century, gives a lot of information about the Turkic states and their epoch. Apart from the common history of Turkic peoples, the textbook covers their shared traditions and national games that have survived to the present day. Without doubt it is expected to positively contribute to the integration of Turkic youth who reside in different regions.

The first step towards the establishment of the Turkic Council and the Turkic Academy, the architect of the Common Turkish History textbook, was made during the 9th Summit of Turkic Speaking Countries in Nakhchivan on October 3, 2009. Following the summit, the Turkic Academy was formally established in Astana (now Nur-Sultan) on May 25, 2010. During 2010-2012, it functioned as a national institution in Kazakhstan. At the 2nd Summit of the Turkic Council held on August 23, 2012, in Bishkek, the Agreement on Establishment of the Turkic Academy as an international organization was signed. The Academy, co-founded by Kazakhstan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan, gained an international status on August 27, 2014. Since that time, the ITA has been increasing cooperation in the fields of history, language, literature and culture to strengthen the ties of brotherhood among Turkic peoples. It is worth noting that during the Bishkek summit, the idea to introduce Common Turkic History as a subject at secondary schools was first proposed and unanimously approved by the Turkic Council member states.

In 2017, the Turkic Academy held a meeting to discuss the process of writing the Common Turkic History textbook, which is overseen by the Turkic Council. During the meeting, the representative of the Turkic Council stated that books that would serve to strengthen the unity of the Turkic states would be prepared. Moreover, he announced that in the future, Common Turkic Geography and Literature textbooks would be developed and taught at schools of Turkic countries. Students, who study common his-

tory, geography, and literature, will eventually become citizens who will serve to enhance the unity of the Turkic nations. The authors of the Common Turkic History textbook also believe that the book will further promote the unity of the entire Turkic world through teaching common history.

Although the Turkic peoples know that they are historically and culturally close, long-term disconnections between them have had a negative effect on their mutual relations. In this sense, a comprehensive historical textbook would be useful. The academicians from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey came together to prepare the textbook which took four years to complete. As a result, the Common Turkic History was first introduced as an elective course at Kazakhstani schools. On October 15, 2019, following the 7th Summit of the Turkic Council in Baku, the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan announced that the Common Turkic History textbook would be included in the country's educational program. As of today, the textbook is used at 157 schools of Azerbaijan, and by 2020, Baku plans to introduce the Common Turkic History course into the educational process at all schools of Azerbaijan. During the meeting of Kazakh-Kyrgyz intellectuals in Bishkek, it was revealed that the Common Turkic History would be taught in Kyrgyzstan as well.

The textbook contains the history and formation of the Hun, Sak, Gokturk, Turgesh, ancient Uyghur, and Kyrgyz khaganates, as well as the Oghuz, Karaköyly, Akkoily, Karluk, Avar, Khazar, Karakhanly, Gazneli, Seljuk, Azerbaijan Atabey and Khorezmshakh states. One can also find information about the Ottoman, Mamluk, Ilkhanate, Golden Horde and Timur states. There is also information about the contribution of the Turks to the world civilization and human history. In the textbook, readers could find the answers to the questions such as "Who are the Turkic people?" and "What are the key issues of the Turkic world?" The textbook gives many examples of the Turkic peoples' respect for other nations and religions, which will be the basis for the development of students' tolerance. It also provides information on common literary characters of that time, their works, and spiritual values.

While the Common Turkic History is being taught in the above mentioned countries as an elective subject, experts, nevertheless, believe that in the future it should be taught at schools as a required course. At present, the Turkic speaking countries are developing cooperation, establishing strong diplomatic relations and striving for closer ties. That is why it is quite possible that in the future, common history will be taught at schools of the Turkic Council countries not as an elective subject, but as a major.

It is also important that the textbook covers the period until the 15th century. Because there were no separate nations and states at the time, the main emphasis is put on the common heritage, historical figures and events of the Turkic Council states and all Turkic peoples. Therefore, the authors say that writing the first textbook was not that difficult. The second book, which would be written for 9th grade students, covers the 15th to 21st centuries. This textbook will be based on undeniable, historically proven facts regarding the establishment of the Babur state, the rise of the Ottoman state and the establishment period of the Kazakh Khanate.

The Common Turkic History textbook is published in the Turkic languages like Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkish as well as in Russian language. The reason it is written in Russian is because there are still so many Russian-language schools in the former Soviet Union countries. In addition to that, there are also Turkic people residing in the Russian Federation, which was a decisive factor in translating the book into the Russian language. Talking about the Turkic Council, it is important to emphasize the developing relationships between the Council and the Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Hungary. In 2019, Uzbekistan joined the Turkic Council. On October 15 of the same year, a delegation headed by Shavkat Mirziyoyev took part in the 7th Summit of the Turkic Council in Baku. During the summit, Uzbekistan stated that it was ready to join international organizations such as the ITA, formed by the Turkic states. If Uzbekistan becomes a member of the ITA, the Common Turkic History course may also be included in the Uzbek curriculum. This is because Uzbek scholars also participated in the development of the textbook. Turkmenistan is not yet a member of the Turkic Council or the ITA. However, the country is invited as a guest to international events in the Turkic states, and we could expect new developments from Turkmenistan. In addition, since 2018, Hungary has had an observer status in the Turkic Council and the ITA. The Turkic Council's representative office was opened in Budapest in 2019. It is expected that in the future, the Common Turkic History course will be included in the educational process of schools in Hungary as well as in Turkmenistan.

To conclude, it should be noted that the Common Turkic History textbook is a project that has just been implemented and integrated into the learning process, where we could see its outcomes in near future. According to experts, the new initiative allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the origin of the Turkic nations. Another important issue is that the young people who will grow up by reading this book will have the consciousness of their ancestors' historic contributions to human civilization.

Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- During his official visit to Turkey, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev met with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan. After face-to-face negotiations, the heads of the two countries chaired the first meeting of the bilateral High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. The parties considered various issues of interstate cooperation, defined key future tasks, agreed the implementation of joint projects and signed a number of documents on cooperation in the fields of trade, economy and technology (Kun.uz, 21.02.2020).
- President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev visited the headquarters of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Armed Forces where he was informed about the existing threats in crisis regions of the world. He also got acquainted with modern types of weapons and military equipment that the directorate's units are equipped with. In conclusion, President Tokayev instructed the directorate to continue working on improving and developing the country's military intelligence system (Akorda, 18.02.2020).
- President Tokayev met with the country's newly elected Supreme Mufti Nauрызбай казы Тағанұлы to discuss issues related to the role of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan in strengthening the unity and stability of the country, as well as in countering the spread of destructive religious movements. The supreme mufti introduced the president with the administration's plans on informational, organizational and charity work (Akorda, 21.02.2020).
- At a ceremony in Dushanbe, Kazakh diplomats handed two sets of security equipment manufactured at Kazakhstan's Petropavlovsk Plant of Heavy Machine Building over to the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan. The transfer of the equipment intended for Tajik correctional institutions was part of Kazakhstan's efforts to create a national system for official development assistance. Previously, Kazakhstan provided humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in the form of educational grants and the construction of educational institutions (MFA of Kazakhstan, 20.02.2020).
- President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon attended a military parade commemorating the 27th anniversary of the establishment of the country's armed forces. Over 8,000 military personnel of the Dushanbe garrison took part in the event. Along with the parade, there was an exhibition of various military equipment, weapons and ammunition used in the country's army (President.tj, 21.02.2020).
- During his visit to Kyrgyzstan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary Peter Szijjarto held bilateral meetings with President Sooronbai Jeenbekov and his Kyrgyz counterpart Chingiz Aidarbekov. The minister also attended an opening ceremony of the embassy of Hungary in Bishkek and a business forum with participation of Kyrgyz and Hungarian entrepreneurs. The parties also discussed cooperation within the framework of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Kabar, 19.02.2020).

Economy, Finance, and Energy

- A Kyrgyz-Chinese joint venture that planned to construct a \$275 million logistics center in Kyrgyzstan's Naryn region has been cancelled in response to sustained local protests against the investment project. The arrangement, settled during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Bishkek for the annual Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, entailed the leasing of 200 hectares of land in the At-Bashi district by the Naryn Free Economic Zone for 49 years to the joint venture (The Diplomat, 20.02.2020).
- The trade turnover between Turkey and Kazakhstan increased by over \$68.5 million in 2019, compared to 2018, and exceeded \$2.2 billion. Total exports of Turkey to Kazakhstan amounted to \$806 million, while imports from Kazakhstan reached \$1.4 billion. Turkey's overall foreign trade turnover exceeded \$374.2 billion in 2019. Its total exports amounted to over \$171.5 billion (2.1% increase), and imports equaled \$202.7 billion (9.1% decrease) (Trend, 19.02.2020).
- The government of Kazakhstan signed a memorandum of understanding with the German industrial giant Siemens during the visit of President Tokayev to Munich to attend the annual security conference. According to the document, Siemens will share its know-how in digital technologies with Kazakhstan and contribute to the digitalization of the country's key industries. Moreover, the company will help Kazakhstan to develop a roadmap for the energy sector's development using advanced digital technologies and equipment (Caspian News, 19.02.2020).
- President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev tasked the government with improving the system of licensing and issuing permits in the field of entrepreneurship. The main tasks include the exclusion of business activities that do not present harm for human health from the licensing requirements, the introduction of alternative methods of regulating entrepreneurial activity, and the development of transparent mechanisms for issuing licenses and permits (President.uz, 17.02.2020).
- The government of Turkmenistan plans to build a number of industrial and production facilities in different parts of the country in 2020-2023. According to the decree signed by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the list includes enterprises that will produce ceramic tableware, glass, and reinforcing steel. In addition, the second stages of the Baherden and Lebap cement plants will be constructed that will allow to increase production up to 1 million tons (Turkmenistan Golden Age, 20.02.2020).
- As announced during a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the country's farmers will receive financial support from the government in the amount of 4 billion hryvnia (about \$160 million) in 2020. Priority areas of the agricultural sector covered by financial support in the form of cheaper loans and compensations for costs of acquiring equipment will include the development of livestock breeding, horticulture, and viticulture (Gov.ua, 19.02.2020).

Society and Culture

- A five-day training course on developing cooperation among law enforcement agencies in combating the spread of new psychoactive substances facilitated by the Darkweb was held in Almaty. More than 20 officials from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the course organized by the OSCE jointly with the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center. The participants developed techniques in identifying websites with malicious content, understanding anonymity and encryption, and the functioning of the Darkweb (OSCE, 21.02.2020).
- The Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi launched celebrations dedicated to the 1,150th anniversary of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi in India by hosting a meeting jointly with the embassy of Kazakhstan. The event was attended by the delegation of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Representatives of Indian research centers and academic institutes noted the significance of the legacy of Al-Farabi and emphasized importance of such events for rapprochement of the cultures of the two countries (Kazinform, 18.02.2020).
- According to a poll conducted in Kyrgyzstan by the International Republican Institute, 88% of respondents consider Russia as the most important economic partner of Kyrgyzstan and 95% of them evaluate Kyrgyz-Russian relations as "good". 80% of respondents assess the relations with Kazakhstan as "good", followed by Turkey (65%), Uzbekistan (64%), the European Union (62%), and China (55%) (Kabar, 17.02.2020).
- The opening ceremony of an honorary consulate of Kazakhstan was held in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. The honorary consulate will cover the Kharkiv, Poltava and Sumy regions of Ukraine and pay particular attention to promoting the interests of Kazakhstan, developing trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, and protecting the rights and interests of Kazakh citizens and legal entities (Forbes Kazakhstan, 20.02.2020).
- The UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions entered into force for Uzbekistan. The convention signed in October 2005 is meant to protect and promote various forms of cultural expression and create conditions for free communication and development of different cultures by strengthening international cooperation in this field. Uzbekistan ratified the convention in October 2019 (UzA, 17.02.2020).
- According to the French Insurly portal, Uzbekistan took the 46th position in the world's tourist safety ranking and was ranked first among CIS countries. The ranking is based on the analysis of main risks for tourists visiting a foreign country such as the likelihood of natural disasters, the quality of healthcare, the number of crimes, including terrorism, and transport risks. Among the Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan is followed by Turkmenistan (60th), Kazakhstan (71st), Tajikistan (93rd) and Kyrgyzstan (106th) (CA-portal, 21.02.2020).