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. Today, 20,000 students in Turkey, 10,000 in Azerbaijan, and 15,000 in Kazakhstan are studying Common Turkic History as an elective course, whereas the textbook covering the period from the earliest times to the 15th century gives a lot of information about ancient Turkic peoples such as the Huns, the Uighurs, and the Uzbeks. 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 representatives of the Turkic Council stated that books that would serve to strengthen the unity of the Turkic states would be prepared. The important issue is that the textbook will be taught at schools of the ITA member 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 16th 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 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 setting up 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.

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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 talks, the heads of the two countries chaired the first meeting of the 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 (Kaz.uz, 21.02.2020).
- President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev visited the headquarters of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Armed Forces to be 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 Mullah Nauybadzhan Targamag to discuss issues related to the role of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Kazakhstan in enhancing the unity and stability of the country, as well as in countering the spread of destructive religious movements. The meeting was introduced by the president with the administration’s plans on informational, organizational, and charity work (Akorda, 21.02.2020).
- At a ceremony in Dushanbe, Kazakhstan’s diplomatic missions handed over two sets of security equipment manufactured at Kazakhstani’s Petropavlovsk Plant of Heavy Machinery to the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan. The transfer of the equipment intended for Tajik correctional institutions is part of Kazakhstan’s efforts to create a national system for official development assistance. At the beginning of the week, the Kazakh president expressed humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in the form of educational and construction of educational institutions (MFA of Kazakhstan, 20.02.2020).
- President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdymuhamedov, attended a military parade commemorating the 379th 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 also an exhibition of various military equipment, weapons and ammunition used in the country’s army (President.kz, 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 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. This presidential visit is seen as an important milestone within the framework of the Co-operation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Kabar, 19.02.2020).

Economy, Finance, and Energy

- A Kyrgyz-Chinese joint venture that planned to cooperate on the construction of a $275 million logistics center in Kyrgyzstan’s Naryn region has been cancelled in response to sustained local resistance against the investment project. The arrangement, settled during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to Kyrgyzstan in March for the annual Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit, entailed the leasing of 200 hectares of land in the Al-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 $2.7 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 supply 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 (Caspiian News, 19.02.2020).
- The government 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. The priority areas of the agricultural sector covered by financial support in the form of cheaper loans and compensation payments 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, 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 115th anniversary of Abul Naser 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 the importance of such events for rapprochement of the cultures of the two countries (Forbes Kazakhstan, 18.02.2020).
- According to a poll conducted in Kyrgyzstan by the International Republican Institute. 38% 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 believe that 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 consul will cover the Kharkiv, Poltava and Sumy regions of Ukraine and will participate in programs promoting the interests of Kazakhstan, developing trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, including 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, the highest place was occupied by Turkmenistan (60th), Kazakhstan (71st), Tajikistan (93rd) and Kyrgyzstan (103rd) (CA-portal, 21.02.2020).