



## A BRIEF REVIEW ON YOUTH POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

As of today, the population of Kazakhstan, which is approaching 19 million, has an average age of 30.7 recorded in 2020. With this average, almost half of the population of Kazakhstan, which ranks 114th in the world, is under the age of 29. The ratio of the population between the ages of 14-29, which is accepted as the youth age range in the Youth Law and other relevant official documents, corresponds to 22.3% within the total population. In this study, the youth policies of Kazakhstan from its independence to the present will be briefly examined.

As a young republic, Kazakhstan has a young and very dynamic population demographically. During the 30 years since independence, Kazakhstan has been experiencing significant changes and transformations in every field. Undoubtedly, youth as a social group has been both an object and a subject of the transition period experienced after 1990. Based on this importance, Kazakhstan has made many legal regulations on youth since the 1990s and has developed various projects and programs related to implementation. These are chronologically "Kazakhstan Strategic Development Plan 2030" (1997), "State Youth Concept" (1999), "Kazakhstan Youth Program" (2001), "2005-2007 Youth Program" (2005), "Kazakhstan Strategic Development Plan 2020" (2010), "Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy" (2012), "Kazakhstan Youth Policy Concept until 2020" (2013) and "Kazakhstan State Youth Law" (2015). Apart from these, there are other relevant legal regulations regarding the training of youth and strengthening their place in the development of the country, especially the education and labor laws, and institutional structures such as the Youth Council.

If we look at the Youth Law, which is a basic regulatory document, first of all, the youth is determined as between 14-29 years old in the first article of the law. Education, science, health, employment, entrepreneurship, spiritual, cultural and physical development of youth are determined as basic principles in the law (art.3), which emphasizes the determination of a scientific, holistic and systematic approach in youth policies. For the youth, which is accepted as the main element of intergenerational continuity, special emphasis was placed on family education at the point of transferring traditions, and "youth forums" created at the national and regional level in terms of citizenship, social and political participation and responsibilities were mentioned.

Apart from the Youth Law, one of the main documents of the growth and development planning of Kazakhstan are the Addresses of the Founding President Nursultan Nazarbayev to the public and the 2030 and 2050 Strategy Documents, where important targets and road maps for the youth of Kazakhstan were determined. In this context, it is seen that youth is given a special and detailed place in many parts of the "Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy", which is the most recent of the previous speeches and strategy documents. When we look generally, it is frequently emphasized that Kazakhstan is

a young nation with its low average age, and that the investment made in human capital from independence to the present provides the emergence of a talented and young generation, and that this youth is the guarantee of the country's development. In this context; "Who are we?, Where is our direction? Where will we be by 2050?" questions were addressed to young people and the goal of "being among the 30 most developed countries" is assigned to young people as a mission. Regarding the value judgments of youth, emphasizing that moving away from cultural codes and deviating to extremes poses a great risk for national identity and in particular, attention is given to the dangerous consequences of the recently emerged "real Kazakh" (Nagy) and "half Kazakh" (Shala) differentiation. In addition to the general topics, the 2050 Strategy also includes a special section titled "Appeal to the Youth". In the aforementioned section, it is stated that the youth, the main element of the success chain extending from the family to the state, constitute the power center of the 2050 Strategy, therefore, especially the Youth Concept, which created important programs and action plans for the youth and the best education opportunities are offered to the youth for a better future.

We can say that the policies determined in the basic regulations, which are briefly summarized, have been implemented to a large extent. In addition to these, 2019 has been declared as the "Year of Youth". Looking at these practices to date, we can say that many projects have been initiated and continued for education, employment, entrepreneurship, political participation and representation, improvement of living standards, protection and development of national and spiritual values. Among these topics, the field of education attracts attention. Because within the framework of the 5-year development programs, educational institutions in the field ranging from pre-school to higher education have been taken to a very advanced level in terms of both infrastructure and education quality. With the spread of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS), which was started as a pilot project, across the country, Kazakhstan's secondary education approached OECD standards. A similar reform process is experienced in higher education. As of 2021, more than 500 thousand students are studying at various levels in 129 higher education institutions. On the other hand, within the framework of the "Bolashak Scholarship Program" initiated in 1993, 13,976 young people were awarded by scholarships to study at the world's leading universities, and 7,846 of them completed their education and started working in various institutions.

The "2020 Employment Roadmap" program was accepted within the scope of priorities such as providing quality education, encouraging entrepreneurship and ensuring workforce mobility according to the founding President Nursultan Nazarbayev's statement "human resources are the foundation of modernization". In this framework, technical and vocational

training were given to more than 20 thousand young people, approximately 1,500 people were provided with micro-credits to start their own businesses, and as a result, employment was created for more than 160 thousand young people. Within the framework of this program, the youth unemployment rate, which was 5% in 2016, was reduced to 3.98% in 2021 according to official data.

Important steps have also been taken in terms of socialization of young people, political participation and representation. The most important of these is the Youth Council formed under the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Senate). Besides the Youth Council, which was established as an advisory board aiming to reflect the expectations of the youth effectively in the legislative process, committees and forums have been established to include young people in political and administrative mechanisms, as well as at the level of various ministries and local administrations, especially the Ministry of Information and Social Development. On the other hand, with the coordination and support of the Ministry of Information and Social Development, it is encouraged to increase the level of social and political participation of young people through non-governmental organizations. As a result of all these policies, the visibility of youth in the decision-making processes and levels of politics and bureaucracy increases with each passing year.

Apart from these basic policies, various projects and programs have been implemented to raise the health, housing and living standards of the youth. For instance, the budgets allocated to health investments are increased, with government support, housing (over 40 thousand) for young people (young families) is being built, both for rent and for sale at affordable prices. On the other hand, social opportunities are tried to be developed for young people to spend quality time by socializing.

In conclusion, within a short period of 30 years, the youth policies of Kazakhstan, especially in the field of education, had tangible results. However, some problems that need to be emphasized are still awaiting solutions. Among them, despite the officially stated youth unemployment rate of 3.98%, 42% of the youth have problems with job satisfaction and finding a qualified job, in addition, as a result of other socio-economic expectations, it is seen that 41% of Kazakhstani youth have a high expectation to live abroad permanently due to education or work. It is vital for young Kazakhstan to take the necessary measures and the necessity of emphasizing this phenomenon, which can be defined as the loss of qualified human resources and brain drain. Another issue that should be mentioned is the development of policies that will eliminate the possible destructive consequences of globalization on the national and moral values of the youth. At this point, it is important to support national projects such as "spiritual resurrection" (Ruhani Zhangyru) with comparative scientific research on youth.

## Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani of Qatar. The parties discussed the current state and prospects for the development of bilateral relations, including strengthening political and economic cooperation. President Tokayev mentioned an importance of the joint preparation of several flagship investment projects, agreements on which were reached recently in a telephone conversation with Qatar's 4th Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani (Kazinform, 10.06.2021).
- The President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Zhaparov made an official visit to Turkey, where he had a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan. According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Ruslan Kazakbaev, the meeting between the Presidents is the first political contact at the highest level. The parties agreed to create a Kyrgyz-Turkish Development Fund to support Kyrgyz businessmen and Turkish investors and to bring the trade turnover between the countries up to \$1 billion (Kabar, 12.06.2021).
- The First Deputy Communications and Informatization Minister of Belarus Pavel Tkach and the Vice Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of Kazakhstan Asset Turyssov conducted a working meeting. The parties exchanged experience in the development of national information systems, introduction and development of interdepartmental electronic document circulation, centralized storage of electronic documents and archives. They agreed to expand cooperation both within the Eurasian Economic Union and on a bilateral basis (BelTA, 09.06.2021).
- Former Prime Minister of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh won the presidential elections receiving 67.69% of the votes. His main rivals Dangaasuren Enkhbat of the Right Person Electorate Coalition and the opposition Democratic Party's candidate Sodnomzundui Erdene received 20.31% and 5.99% of the votes, respectively. 1,208,408 out of 2,041,985 registered voters cast their votes, reaching 59.24% of voter turnout. (Anadolu Agency, 10.06.2021).
- The Ambassador of Afghanistan to the Kyrgyz Republic Bismillah Vaziri met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Aibek Artykbaev. The parties discussed issues of developing bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian aid, including investment, tourism, education, as well as promoting peace and security in Afghanistan. Deputy Minister Artykbayev thanked the Afghan government for the measures taken to improve the situation of ethnic Kyrgyz in the Pamirs (Kabar.kg, 11.06.2021).
- Speaking at the annual international forum "The Primakov Readings" held in Moscow in hybrid format, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov urged everyone involved in the Karabakh conflict to promote the establishment of peace and normal life in the region. Minister Lavrov also mentioned that interests of Turkey and Iran were unequivocally taken into account while drafting the Nagorno-Karabakh agreement. The forum represents an international dialogue platform for the exchange of ideas on global economic interdependence, foreign policy and potential security issues (MEHR news agency, 09.06.2021).

## Economy, Finance, and Energy

- The National Company «KAZAKH INVEST» organized a meeting with Turkish investors in Kazakhstan. The investor delegation, consisting of representatives of the "BRIMSTONE" Sulfur Provider Company, is engaged in the implementation of a project in the chemical industry in the country. The project will enable the production of sulfur concrete in one of the western regions of Kazakhstan. The company plans to invest about \$10 million and create around 50 new permanent jobs within the project (Kazinform, 08.06.2021).
- The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to Tajikistan. Within the visit, in the first Uzbek-Tajik interregional investment forum organized between countries, bilateral documents worth 730 million dollars were signed. The participants noted that geographical proximity and convenient logistics have created favorable conditions for the development of mutual trade. To support and promote joint projects, the countries decided to create an Uzbek-Tajik investment fund with an authorized capital of \$50 million (UzReport, 10.06.2021).
- Representatives of Uzbek car manufacturer UzAuto Motors visited Tajikistan to see production facilities of the partner company Aluminsohmtom. As a result, the company from Uzbekistan announced that it would build a \$2 million factory in Tajikistan. The parties will organize a joint venture with an annual production of 10 thousand vehicles, which will be increased to 35 thousand units. The partners agreed to name the new enterprise Auto Motors Tajikistan (UzReport, 12.06.2021).
- According to the National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, the country's foreign trade turnover during 4 month of 2021 reached \$2.1 billion, increasing by almost 14% compared to the same period last year. Kyrgyzstan's exports amounted to \$590.4 million, decreasing by 8.7%, while its imports increased by 26.2% and reached almost \$1.494 billion. According to the data from the Committee, exports of paper and cardboard, knitted clothing and accessories, fruit and nuts, and gold experienced significant decline (Kabar, 11.06.2021).
- Economic cooperation between Turkmenistan and the United Arab Emirates is deepening. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development signed two agreements worth \$100 million with the Government of Turkmenistan. Within the first agreement, the Fund will allocate \$75 million for the construction of an airport, while in the framework of the second agreement it will provide \$25 million to finance the development of a 10-megawatt hybrid power plant. (WAM, 10.06.2021).
- Turkey and Azerbaijan in cooperation with Georgia launched a new logistics project called "TURKUAZ", where a cargo transportation from Turkey to Azerbaijan and in the opposite direction is carried out twice a week. The project aims to increase the volume of cargo transported by the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. Within the framework of TURKUAZ project, 880 tons of industrial soda products were delivered from Turkey to Azerbaijan in 32 20-foot containers recently. (AzerNews, 11.06.2021).

## Society and Culture

- The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TURKPA) together with Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Atatürk Center in Azerbaijan organized a symposium titled "Past, Present and Future of the Turkic World" dedicated to the 30th anniversary of independence of Turkic-speaking states, the Great Victory of Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War and 100th anniversary of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The event was attended by the parliamentarians and diplomats from the member countries, heads of Turkic cooperation organizations and prominent scholars. The participants exchanged views on achievements and progress in the Turkic-speaking countries over the last 30 years and role of the parliaments in this context (Turkpa.org, 09.06.2021).
- During his first official visit to Ankara, the President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Zhaparov had a meeting with the Secretary General of the Turkic Council Baghdad Amreyev and the President of the Chambers, Commodity Exchanges and Union (TOBB), Mr. Rifat Hisarciklioglu. The parties discussed the ongoing cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Turkic Council Member States, emphasizing economic aspects of the relations. In particular, it was agreed to organize a business forum of entrepreneurs of Turkic Council Member States in Issyk-Kul on August 9, 2021 by the Turkic Council, TOBB and the Turkey: Culture of Change Initiative (TCCI) (Turkkon.org, 10.06.2021).
- The EU will provide 100.000 Euro as humanitarian aid to assist the communities that have been affected the most a series of floods and mudflows in the Khatlon province of Tajikistan in early May, 2021. The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The aid will directly benefit some 1.800 heavily affected people who have lost their food supplies, personal assets, livestock and agricultural lands (ASIA-Plus, 09.06.2021).
- Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers approved a bill to ratify the agreement with Turkey on a housing project for Crimean Tatars and other ethnic minorities that were internally displaced. The document envisages cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey on the construction of housing for internally displaced persons. According to the document, the Turkish government provides non-refundable assistance by building 500 apartments for the Crimean Tatars and other displaced ethnic minorities in three regions of Ukraine (QHA Crimean News, 10.06.2021).
- The inauguration of a new UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Turkmenistan was held in Ashgabat. The opening ceremony was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, UN agencies in Ashgabat, diplomats and mass media. The new office will work on implementing projects in the fields of health care and combating climate change in Turkmenistan within the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development between the State and the International Organization for 2021-2025 (Centralasia.news, 11.06.2021).
- Russia delivered 70 thousand doses of the second component of the Sputnik V vaccine to Tashkent. A few days before that, 70 thousand doses of the first component of the drug were delivered to Uzbekistan. Residents of the country also receive vaccinations with the AstraZeneca vaccine, the recombinant drug of the Chinese Anhui Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutica, and the Russian Sputnik V. To date, More than one and a half million people in Uzbekistan have already been vaccinated (Uz.sputniknews.ru, 10.06.2021).