



## HUMANITIES AND CULTURE PROJECTS: SUPPORT AND FUNDING

The issue of supporting and funding cultural and humanitarian research, projects, and programs has been and remains challenging for many countries. The essence of humanitarian and cultural activities is that they do not generate significant income, do not lend themselves to commercialization as technological or natural science branches of knowledge. As a rule, the costs of such projects are covered by the state budget, although various funds and targeted programs can serve as additional sources of funding. During the coronavirus pandemic, it has become even more challenging to see the relevance of many humanitarian areas since global attempts to confront the virus have automatically scaled down many initiatives and programs. Thus, all the resources of weakening economies were directed to save humanity from a real threat. But experts in philosophy, literature, and culture offer their perspectives during the crisis and want to work alongside other academics in the fight against COVID-19.

The role of the humanities and cultural projects in the modern world can hardly be overestimated. They aim to solve social problems - such as raising the cultural and educational level of the population, creating a healthy lifestyle and behavior in crises, relieving social and interethnic tensions. However, they also help analyze moral and social problems (e.g., the concept of justice or well-being, issues of law) and possible consequences for public policy. Historical research, concepts developed in philosophy or theology, can help shape current politics by drawing on an understanding of the past by interpreting multiple points of view, patterns, and influences. Literature, art, psychology, and other disciplines illustrate social and economic problems, increasing understanding of the essence and dynamics of transformations of social processes and worldviews, individual and collective, which are undergoing rapid changes before our eyes. The humanities can be especially effective in collaboration with social disciplines in the implementation of public policy, both directly in the form of advice and justification of the principles of new policies, and indirectly, assessing the measures taken, current legislation, etc. That is why many political organizations and international institutions are interested in supporting humanitarian and cultural research, including, among other challenges, training new personnel, creating new programs, and preserving jobs in these areas.

As a positive example of this interest, we can point to some measures announced in

May 2021 by US President Joseph Biden, which were met with approval by the academic community in the United States. In particular, he proposed to significantly increase funding for the country's culture and arts agencies within the framework of a \$6 trillion budget for fiscal 2022. A spokesperson for the National Endowment for the Arts said that "the increased investment in the agency will enable it to provide critical support to the arts sector as it struggles to reopen, rehire and stimulate arts activities that will boost the economy". The National Endowment for the Humanities announced \$51.6 million in funding for 56 state and jurisdictional humanitarian councils and temporary partners to support cultural groups and community and humanitarian educational programs across the country. According to experts, in European countries financial support for the humanities and arts is seen as a function of government. For example, the UK Department of Culture has spent over \$1 billion annually on art for many years. At the same time, opportunities for funding research in the humanitarian and cultural fields from a wide range of sources, including the UK Research Council, British Academy, Leverhulme Trust, British Red Cross, and others, have also been widely used.

In Central Asia, state supported approach for projects has always been predominant, but there are several successful examples of public-private partnership projects in the cultural sector. As an example for private projects in Central Asia we could show the The PEER International Academic Network, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), a British research council and non-departmental government body works which is created to conduct collaborative research on some of the most pressing global development issues in the arts and humanities. This collaboration model was developed to support researchers and non-academic partners in low- and middle-income countries. Scientists from Central Asia can receive up to £30,000 in research grants from the PEER Network. This collaboration focuses on interdisciplinary, targeted research and strengthens the research capacity of the UK and developing countries. The network brings together 4 leading universities: from Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev University), South Africa (University of Cape Town), England (University of Sussex) and Northern Ireland (University of Ulster).

In the European Union countries, there is a network of European research universities,

united in an association called "the Guild", which seeks to position science-intensive universities as the main driving forces of the European knowledge economy. They actively promote an understanding of culture, what it means to be human, and a defender of human rights. They also play a leading role in discussions about the importance of research and education to benefit society, culture, and the economy. That is why the Guild Universities congratulated the Council of the European Union, European Parliament, and European Commission on the completion of negotiations on creating the Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ programs for 2021-2027. As a result of the talks, the budget of Horizon Europe amounted to €95.5 billion. EU institutions have also reached an agreement on the next Erasmus+ program. With a total budget of €26 billion, Erasmus+ will be critical to support the education sector over the next seven years. This long-awaited budget increase should ensure that the high expectations of the multi-mission program can be fulfilled. In particular, Erasmus+ should support the mobility of over 10 million people.

European universities have announced that they will continue interacting with policymakers, fostering public debate, cultivating better higher education, and partnering with private and public institutions to address global challenges. Researchers from universities around the world are working to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our lives. It has already become clear that pandemics are dramatically changing the way human societies live. The social sciences and humanities disciplines can play a critical role in the vital decision-making processes.

The academic world sees its mission in creating new forms of humanitarian and cultural dialogue to mitigate the threats of conflict, marginalization, dislocation, and other social cataclysms. This is of fundamental importance, especially in the context of global crises. In the Central Asian region, the role of intercultural dialogue and respect for the diversity of cultures and arts is extremely important, especially in strengthening mutual understanding, preventing cultural, linguistic and ethnic divisions, as well as preserving different identities. However, these areas, in turn, need support and development. As it turned out, everything in the world, including people, is interconnected and interdependent.

## Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- The President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon received the Secretary-General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Stanislav Zas. The parties discussed priorities of Tajikistan's rotating chairmanship in the Organization, preparations for the next meeting of the CSTO heads of states, and considered current tasks and important security issues. In particular, they focused on the political and military situation in the region and considered it necessary to strengthen the capacity to protect Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan (ASIA-Plus, 02.07.2021).
- The President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov had a phone talk with his Uzbek counterpart Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Presidents discussed the organization of the next Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian states. The leaders also considered issues of bilateral cooperation, including trade, industrial projects and the military-political situation in Afghanistan. The heads of States also exchanged views on the international agenda (Orient.tm, 30.06.2021).
- During a meeting of the Turkey-Uzbekistan Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation, the Vice President of Turkey Fuat Oktay mentioned that President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan had scheduled a visit to Tashkent by the end of this year. Oktay mentioned that the strategic goal of Turkey and Uzbekistan is to increase the volume of bilateral trade to \$10 billion. It is expected that by the end of 2021, the trade turnover will reach \$4 billion (Kun.uz, 29.06.2021).
- Ukraine and NATO launched the "Sea Breeze-2021" joint drills in the Black Sea. 30 warships and 40 aircraft from the U.S. and its NATO allies, including the U.S. destroyer "Ross" have arrived in the Ukrainian port of Odessa for the drills. The President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky visited the Ross destroyer of the U.S. Navy and talked to the commander of the 6th fleet of the U.S. Naval Forces, Vice Admiral Eugene Black. President Zelensky expressed that with the support of the U.S. and NATO partners, on land, at sea and in the air, Ukraine will be able to protect its independence more confidently and successfully (President.gov.ua, 04.07.2021).
- Turkish and Azerbaijani armed forces started joint drills called "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk 2021" in Baku. In total, 600 soldiers, 40 tanks and armored vehicles, 20 cannons, seven war helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles are participating in the drills. The main purpose of the exercises is to enhance the interaction of the two militaries during combat operations and to develop the commanders' military decision-making skills and their ability to manage military units (Daily Sabah, 28.06.2021).
- The President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with the Turkish National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, who arrived in Dushanbe with an official visit. The sides discussed issues related to the expansion of bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Turkey in various areas, including collaboration between the defense ministries of the two countries. Pointing to the recent aggravation of the situation in the regional security issues, President Rahmon and Minister Akar emphasized the need to join the efforts of the international community in the fight against terrorism and extremism (ASIA-Plus, 01.07.2021).

## Economy, Finance, and Energy

- Kazakhstan plans to increase support for the development of e-commerce through the opening of a special school for small and medium-sized businesses. This decision was announced during the online session at the international conference Astana Finance Days. The school's support measures include educational courses, webinars, and new IT tools. According to presented data, the volume of the retail e-commerce market in Kazakhstan has increased by 93% in 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, reaching \$896.7 million (Qazaq TV, 02.07.2021).
- A delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency conducted a comprehensive assessment of Uzbekistan's infrastructure development and concluded that Uzbekistan's measures complied with all regulatory requirements. The delegation mentioned that Uzbekistan achieved significant progress in the development of its nuclear power infrastructure. At the same time, the experts prepared recommendations and suggestions to help the country to build its first nuclear power plant (UzReport, 03.07.2021).
- Kazakhstan and Belarus signed an intergovernmental agreement on trade and economic cooperation in the area of deliveries of oil and oil products to Belarus. According to the Energy Minister of Kazakhstan Nurlan Nogayev, the country will start shipping oil products to Belarus in autumn 2021. Nogayev explained that the agreement expects ratification, after which the countries will determine a plan and a list of goods for shipping and discuss specific volumes and time for deliveries (BelTA, 30.06.2021).
- Bilateral cooperation between the World Bank and Ukraine is deepening. Recently, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a \$212 million financing package for a new project in Ukraine called "Improving Power System Resilience for European Power Grid Integration". It is expected that the project will synchronize the Ukrainian power system with the European electricity grid. Moreover, it will contribute to the decarbonization of the energy sector and increase the energy independence of the country (Ukrinform, 01.07.2021).
- The Russian Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev visited Belgrade, where he had a meeting with his Serbian counterpart Branislav Nedimovic. According to Patrushev, the enforcement of the free trade zone agreement between Serbia and the Eurasian Economic Union will have a significant positive effect on bilateral trade flows. He mentioned that the trade turnover in agriculture between Serbia and Russia had increased by 7% reaching \$500 million in 2020 regardless of the pandemic. Minister Nedimovic noted that the agreement would open new opportunities for Serbian companies. It is expected that the agreement will be enforced on July 10 (TASS, 02.07.2021).
- The World Bank continues to support new projects in Uzbekistan. The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved the Electricity Sector Transformation and Resilient Transmission Project in Uzbekistan. The Government of Uzbekistan will receive \$380 million in credit from the International Development Association and a \$43 million loan from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The GCF will also provide a \$4 million grant to cover selected project activities. The project will modernize Uzbekistan's national power transmission system (Kun.uz, 28.06.2021).

## Society and Culture

- During a ceremony held at the Gazi University in Ankara, the Union of Architects and Engineers of the Turkic World announced that 2021-2022 was proclaimed the Year of Mirzo Ulugbek. The decision was made in recognition of the valuable contribution of this statesman and scientist to the development of world civilization as a whole. The participants of the event praised the efforts of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to restore and strengthen the Uzbek-Turkish relations and expressed its readiness to assist in the implementation of joint large-scale infrastructure projects (UzDaily, 01.07.2021).
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has held the III. Regional Conference titled "Education and Awareness of Climate Change in Europe and Central Asia" online. More than 136 representatives of international organizations, private and public sectors from different countries participated in the event. The event aimed to advance climate education, awareness and engagement in Eastern Europe and Central Asia region building upon the outcomes of UNDP's regional climate education initiative "Climate Box" (Turkmenportal.com, 02.07.2021).
- The Book of Words and Selected Poetry of great Kazakh poet and philosopher Abai were presented in the Norwegian language (Abais dikt og visdomsord). The presentation at the Oslo House of Literature was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence. The works were translated by a Tajik-Norwegian author and literature professor Lutfiya Boboyorova. A prominent Norwegian scholar Ashild Kolås was the Chief Editor who contributed to a biographical chapter (Kazinform, 28.06.2021).
- During his visit to Uzbekistan, the Vice President of Turkey Fuat Oktay visited the historical city of Samarkand. The guest of honor was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Tourism and Sports of Uzbekistan Aziz Abdulkhakimov, and Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade Sardor Umurzakov. While visiting the historical sites and the University of Samarkand, the sides discussed issues of cooperation in research and education. Vice President Oktay confirmed that the Turkish side will make every effort to successfully implement the planned projects in tourism and education (Uzreport, 30.06.2021).
- Azerbaijan and Turkey are planning to shoot joint films and series dedicated to Azerbaijan's victory in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. This was discussed during the meeting of the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan Anar Karimov and the Turkish Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Ahmet Misbah Demircan in Baku. The sides praised the idea and also exchanged views on holding joint film festivals, cooperation between the public and private film organizations and cinematographers of the two countries. The parties agreed to further enhance bilateral cooperation in areas of culture and tourism (Azernews, 29.06.2021).
- The Turkish Deputy Culture and Tourism Minister Ahmet Misbah Demircan met with the President of International Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation Gunay Afandiyeva to discuss prospects of cooperation. The sides stressed the importance of further developing a close partnership with Turkey, which is the founding member of the organization. Ahmet Misbah Demircan expressed his readiness to support the foundation's activities, including conferences, exhibitions and book presentations aimed at promoting Turkic cultural heritage. Gunay Afandiyeva presented Ahmet Misbah Demircan with books reflecting the rich culture and traditions of Turkic-speaking countries, as well as a Karabakh carpet (Azernews, 02.07.2021).