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 years recorded in 2020. With this average, more than 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. Originally, the 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 regarding the education of youth and the protection of young people and the youth, especially in the fields of health, environment, labor and social laws, and institutional structures such as youth councils. 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 toward youth policies. For the youth, which is accepted as the main element of the intergenerational continuity, special emphasis was placed on family education at the point of transferring traditions, and “youth forums” created at the national level in terms of the development of youth, 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 is 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 we are? Where we going? Where will we be by 2050?” questions were addressed to young people and the goal of “being among the 30 most developed countries in the world” 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 phenomena of the recently emerged “real Kazakh” (Naggz) 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 regulatory documents are paid attention to, have been implemented to a large extent. In addition, the programs that have been declared as the “Year of Youth”. Looking at these practices to date, we can say that many projects have been implemented and supported for education, employment, entrepreneurship, political participation and representation, improvement of living standards, innovation 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. The reform process is being experience is higher education. As of 2021, more than 500 thousand students are studying at various levels in 129 Nazarbayev education institutions. On the other hand, within the framework of the “Bolashak Scholarship Program” initiated in 1993, 13,900 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 improving 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, reduced to 3.9% in 2021 according to official data.

Importantly, this has 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 living standards of young people, 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 trying 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 3.9%, 42% of the youth have problems with job satisfaction and finding a qualified job, in addition, as a result of the socio-economic and political situation, it is believed 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.

Written by Suat Beylur, Eurasian Research Institute, Kazakhstan
Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Af-
  fairs Sheik Mohammad bin Abdullahman Al-Thani in Doha. The parties discussed the current state and prospects for the develop-
  ment of bilateral relations, including strengthening political and departmental cooper-
  ation. President Tokayev mentioned an im-
  portance of the joint preparation of several flagships investment projects, agreements on which were reached recently in a telephone conversation with Qatar’s 4th Emir Sheikh
tim Ali bin Hamad Al-Thani (Kazinform, 10.06.2021).

- The President of Kyrgyz Masters Zhangarov 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 Kaz-
  zbaev, the meeting between the Presidents is the first political contact at the highest level. The parties agreed to create a Kry-
  gyz-Turkish Development Fund to support Kry-
  gyz businessmen and Turkish investors and to bring the trade turnover between the coun-
  tries up to $1 billion (Kabar, 12.06.2021).

- The First Deputy Communications and In-
  formatization Minister of Belarus Pavel Tkach was Chair of the Ministerial Digital De-
  velopment, Innovations and Aerospace In-
  dustry of Kazakhstan Asset Turyssov con-
  ducted a virtual meeting. The parties ex-
  changed experience in the development of national information systems, introduc-
  tion and development of departmental elec-
  tronic document circulation, centralized stor-
  age of electronic documents and archives. They also discussed cooperation between the 11
  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 Dangsaakhan Enkhbat of the Right Person Electoral Coalition and the op-
  position Democratic Party’s candidate Sod-
  nomzundui 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. (Ander-
  ssen+, 10.06.2021).

- The Ambassador of Afghanistan to the Kyr-
  gyz Republic Bismillah Veziz met with De-
  puty Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Aibek Artikbaev. The parties discussed is-
  sues of developing bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade, economic, cultural and hu-
  manitarian relations, including investment, tour-
  ism, education, as well as promoting peace and security in Afghanistan. Deputy Minister
  Artikbaev thanked the Afghan government for the measures taken to improve the situa-
  tion of ethnic Kyrgyz in the Pamirs (Ka-
  bar.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 establish-
  ment of peace and normal life in the re-
  gion. Minister Lavrov also mentioned that in-
  terests of Turkey and Iran were unequivo-
  cally taken into account while drafting the
  Nagorno-Karabakh agreement. The forum represents an international dialogue platform for the exchange of ideas on global economic inter-
  national issues, including energy and potential security issues (MEHR news agency, 09.06.2021).

Economy, Finance, and Energy

- The National company «KAZAKH IN-
  VEST» organized a meeting with Turkish in-
  vestors in Kazakhstan. The investor delega-
  tion, consisting of representatives of the “BRIMSTONE” Sulfur Provider Company, is
  engaged in the implementation of a project in the chemical and petrochemical industry. The
  project will enable the production of sulfur concrete in one of the western regions of Ka-
  zakhstan. The company plans to invest about $10 million and create around 50 new perma-
  nent jobs within the project (Kazinform, 08.06.2021).

- The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mir-
  ziyoyev paid an official visit to Tajikistan. Within the visit, in the first Uzbek-Tajik in-
  terregional investment forum organized be-
  tween countries, bilateral documents worth 730 million dollars were signed. The partici-
  pants 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-Ta-
  jik investment fund with an authorized capi-
  tal of $50 million (UzReport, 10.06.2021).

- Representatives of Uzbek car manufacturer UzAuto Motors visited Tajikistan to see pro-
  duction facilities of the partner company Al-
  minsokhtmon. 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 Commit-
  tee of Kyrgyzstan, the country’s foreign trade turnover during 4 month of 2021 reached
  $2.1 billion, increasing by almost 14% com-
  pared to the same period last year. Kyrgyz-
  stan’s exports amounted to $590.4 million, decreasing by 8.7%, while its imports in-
  creased by 26.2% and reached almost $1.494
  billion. According to the data from the Com-
  mittee, exports consisted of cardboard, knit-
  ted clothing and accessories, fruit and nuts, and gold experienced significant decline (Ka-
  bar, 11.06.2021).

- Economic cooperation between Turkmeni-
 斯坦和 the United Arab Emirates is develop-
  ing. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development signed two agreements worth $100 million with the Government of Turkmenistan. Within the first agreement, the Fund will al-
  locate $75 million for the construction of an
  airport, while in the framework of the second agreement it will provide $25 million to fi-
  nance the development of a 10-megawatt hy-
  brid power plant. (WAM, 10.06.2021).

- Turkey and Azerbaijan in cooperation with
  Georgia launched a new logistics project
called “TURKUZ”, where a cargo transpor-
  tation 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-Thilisi-Kars
  railway. Within the framework of TURK-
  KUZ 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 (PASOC) together with
  Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaij-
  an and Association of Diplomats of the Turkic
  Speaking states, the Great Victory of Azer-
  baian in the Second Karabakh War and 100th anniversary of the Grand National As-
  sembley of Turkey. The event was attended by the parliamentarians and diplomats from the
  member countries, heads of Turkic coopera-
  tion organizations and prominent scholars. The participants exchanged views on achieve-
  ments and progress in the Turkic-speaking countries over the last 30 years and role of the par-
  liaments in this context (Turka.org, 09.06.2021).

- During his first official visit to Ankara, the President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Jomart
  Tokayev had a meeting with the Secretary General of the Turkic Council Bagdad Amreyev and the
  President of the Chambers, Commodity Ex-
  changes and Union (TOBB), Mr. Rifat Hisarciklioglu. The parties discussed the on-
  going cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Turkish Council Member States, emphasizing
economic aspects of the relations. In particular, it was agreed to organize a business fo-
  rum of entrepreneurs of the Kyrgyzstan Council Member States in Issyk-Kul on August 9, 2021 by the Turkic Council, TOBB and the Turkic Council Coordination Commi-
  ttee (TCC) (Turkfon.org, 10.06.2021).

- The EU will provide 100.000 Euro as human-
  itarian aid to assist the communities that have been affected the most a series of floods and
  mudflows in the Khatlon province of Tajik-
 istan in early May. The project is part of the EU’s overall contribution to the Disas-
  trous Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) of the
  International Federation of Red Cross and Red
  Crescent Societies (IFRC). The aid will di-
  rectly benefit some 1,800 heavily affected people who have lost their food supplies, per-
  sonal 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 dis-
  placed. The document envisages cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey in the construc-
  tion of housing for internally displaced per-
  sons. According to the agreement, the Ukrainian government provides non-refundable as-
  sistance by building 500 apartments for the Cime-
  rian Tatars and other Turkic ethnic minori-
  ties in three regions of Ukraine (QHA Crimean News, 10.06.2021).

- The inauguration of a new UN Office for Pro-
  ject Services (UNOPS) in Turkmenistan was held in Ashgabat. The opening ceremony
  was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, UN a-
  gencies in Ashgabat, diplomats and mass media. The new office will work on implementing
  projects in the fields of health care and combat-
  ing climate change within the Partnership Framework for Sus-
  tainable Development between the State and the United Nations for 2021-2025 (Centralasia.news, 11.06.2021).

- Russia delivered 70 thousand doses of the se-
  cond component of the Sputnik V vaccine to
  Tashkent. A few days before that, 70 thou-
  sand doses of the first component of the
  vaccine that were delivered to Uzbekistan. Residents of the country also receive vaccinations with the Astrazeneca vaccines. The recombiant drug of the Chinese Anhui Zhifei Longcom Bio-
  pharmacuetica, and the Russian Sputnik V. To date, More than one million people in Uzbekistan have already been vac-
  cinated (Uz.spuniknews.ru, 10.06.2021).