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COMMISSION ON EDUCATION, CULTURE, SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

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ONLINE

REPORT

Rapprochement of Processes in the field of Education in TURKPA Member States: Problems and Prospects of Development

INTRODUCTION

In line with the Plan of Activities of TURKPA for 2025 adopted at the TURKPA General Plenary Session held in the capital city of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, the topic of "Rapprochement of Processes in the field of Education in TURKPA Member States: Problems and Prospects of Development" has been designated as the main agenda item for the 12th Committee Meeting of the TURKPA Commission on Education, culture, social and humanitarian affairs.

At the 8th summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) held in 2021, the decision was made to adopt the strategic document "Turkic World Vision–2040." This strategic document outlines pathways for joint actions in several areas: economic, cultural, security, education, and many other sectors. The "Vision of the Turkic World – 2040" strategy sets forth several key tasks and goals in Education. This strategy aims to deepen the cooperation of Turkic States in education, improve the quality of education, and strengthen joint efforts. It includes initiatives in innovation, academic cooperation, the establishment of digital education platforms, higher education, and the enhancement of teachers' qualifications.

Integration and cooperation in the field of education are important and necessary processes in the modern world. The development of such ties between countries and educational systems is conditioned by the improvement of international relations and the promotion of economic, cultural, social development.

According to international estimates, about 84 million children will not attend school by 2030, and about 70 percent of ten-year-olds in sub-Saharan Africa cannot read simple text. In addition, gaps remain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to record school closures and the loss of knowledge for an entire generation.

In all TURKPA countries, the coverage of basic education (primary and secondary) is 95-100%, which is a great achievement. However, there are problems with access to quality education in rural and remote regions. The Turkic States with more developed economies have higher rates of youth enrollment in higher education, while in other countries access to higher education is limited due to various factors such as economic conditions and the number of university places. One of the main problems for all countries is the disparity in access to education between urban and rural areas, especially in those countries where rural infrastructure is poorly developed. At the same time, the TURKPA countries spend approximately $65.55 billion annually on education, where children and youth under the age of 24 make up 30-45% of the total population of these countries.

According to UNESCO, last year, the investment deficit for achieving quality education for all in developing countries was at the level of $100 billion annually. According to some estimates, 40 percent of the world's population lives in countries where governments spend more on servicing foreign debt than on education or healthcare.

In this regard, strengthening cooperation in the field of education plays a key role in improving the quality of educational systems, ensuring their sustainability and adaptability to modern challenges. This is not only about financial investments, but also about a strategic approach to cooperation between States, educational institutions, the private sector, and international organizations. Investments in education can be focused on various aspects, from infrastructure to innovative technologies and educational programs.

Education is one of the priorities on the agenda of multilateral cooperation among the Member States. In search of mutually beneficial solutions to meet educational needs, Member States will focus on issues of harmonization of the curriculum and the credit system, cooperation in the field of recognition of diplomas and academic qualifications, and further development of education

systems. In this context, the Commission will discuss the problems and prospects of cooperation between the TURKPA member States in the field of education with a view to bringing legislation closer and uniformity of legal conditions.

AZERBAIJAN

The Republic of Azerbaijan cooperates with the TURKPA member States in various fields of science and education. To develop this cooperation, the following international agreements in the field of education were signed with Türkiye, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz Republic:

• Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye on cooperation in the field of education, signed in Baku on October 31, 2017

• Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Türkiye on cooperation in the field of higher education, signed in Baku on October 31, 2017;

• Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye on cooperation in the field of vocational education, signed in Ankara on February 19, 2021;

• Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Türkiye on the establishment of the Turkish-Azerbaijani University (TAU), signed in Ankara on February 19, 2024;

• Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic on cooperation in the field of education and science, signed in Baku on April 24, 2024;

• Agreement between the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of science and higher education, signed in Baku on April 3, 2017.

There are cooperative relations between the general educational institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the general educational institutions of the Republics of Türkiye and Kazakhstan. Thus, cooperation agreements have been signed between the Novruzov Brothers Secondary School No. 36 in Baku and the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools Autonomous Educational Organization's Nazarbayev Chemistry-Biology Oriented Intellectual School in Aktau, the Mikayil Mushfig Secondary School No. 18 in

Baku and the Yıldız Tınas İzmiroğlu Anatolian High School, the Academician Zarifa Aliyeva Secondary School No. 7 in Jalilabad and the Nevşehir Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Anatolian Imam Hatip High School of the Republic of Türkiye, the Aliabad Village Secondary School in Bilasuvar District and the Denizli City Atatürk Secondary School of the Republic of Türkiye, the Sabir Settlement Secondary School in Shamakhi District and the Kocaeli/Derince - Cumhuriyet Secondary School and the Kastamonu Şenpazar Multi-Program Anatolian High School.

At the same time, there are cooperative relations between S. Vurgun Secondary School No. 5 in Yevlakh city and Canik Uludag Secondary School in Samsun city, Republic of Türkiye, Ağsu district Mammad Mirzamammadov Aratkend village secondary school and Zonguldak/Alaplı-Karşıyaka primary school in the Republic of Türkiye and Elmaz Kaşka Amasya Mehmed Bilgili primary school, Balakan district Nasimi city secondary school No. 2 and Rize city/ Fatma Nuri Erkan Science and Art Center and Adıyaman/Sincik-İmam Hatip high school, Balakan district Ali Shirinov Garaveli village secondary school and Cemal Gürbüz Atik Secondary School and Denizli İnceler Atatürk Secondary School.

Within the framework of the cooperation with the Republic of Türkiye in the field of vocational education, educational programs (curricula) and curricula for 5 specialty groups and 10 specialties have been adapted, and work has been carried out to harmonize content-related differences - number of weeks, distribution of hours, general education subjects and specialty modules.

Since 2022, 50 textbooks have been translated (9 textbooks in 2023, 13 textbooks in 2024) in various vocational directions.

In accordance with the “Protocol on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye in the Field of Vocational Education”, in-service trainings are being organized in the Republic of Türkiye for the teaching and pedagogical staff of various vocational education institutions to improve the specialized knowledge of the teaching and pedagogical staff and familiarize them with modern teaching approaches. The trainings are organized in various vocational education institutions located in the cities of Izmir, Istanbul, Ankara, Bursa and Antalya of the Republic of Türkiye. Since 2022, trainings have been organized for 52 teachers in ICT, vehicle repair, welding, fashion design, furniture industry, design and other specialized fields, as well as 27 management personnel. In 2023, trainings were organized for 31 teachers in industry, ICT, fashion design, tourism, furniture industry, service, vehicle operation, agriculture and other specialized fields, as well as 9 management personnel. In 2024, trainings were organized for 7 management personnel.

In February 2024 the “Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Vocational Education between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye” was signed .

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan is actively developing cooperation in the field of education with other countries of The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA), seeking to strengthen ties and strengthen educational cooperation at all levels — from school to higher education. Kazakhstan, as one of the key countries of the Assembly, has significant initiatives and projects aimed at developing joint educational programs, academic exchanges, and scientific research.

On March 1, 2004, a program of long-term cooperation in the fields of culture, science, and tourism was signed in Astana between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

On April 3, 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of education. The agreement is aimed at developing cooperation in the field of education between the two countries based on equality and mutual benefit.

In 2022, 43 students of higher education institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan studied at universities in Azerbaijan.

On March 11, 2024, during the visit of the Head of State to the Republic of Azerbaijan, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan on mutual recognition of professional diplomas of crew members of naval vessels.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan actively cooperate in the field of education, having signed several key agreements aimed at developing bilateral relations and educational programs:

-Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic on Cooperation in the Field of Education dated July 4, 2006, which provides for the annual exchange of students for bachelor’s and master’s programs.

-Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education and Science was signed on 21 October, 2019, between the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. This agreement covers academic exchange, joint scientific research, the creation of educational and scientific centers, as well as the

organization of scientific conferences and symposia, which contribute to deepening scientific and educational cooperation between the two countries.

-Agreement on the Academic Exchange Program for Students and Faculty was signed on June 12, 2020 by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. The program involves student and faculty exchange, qualification enhancement, and the organization of short-term educational courses, which provide an opportunity to deepen the knowledge and skills of academic representatives from both countries.

-On October 5, 2022, the Agreement on Joint Grant Programs for Students and Postgraduate Students was signed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, provides grants for students and postgraduate students from both countries to study and conduct scientific research as part of joint projects. This supports the development of academic and scientific ties between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

In the first half of 2023, 102 students of higher education institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan were trained in the framework of academic mobility at universities in Kyrgyzstan, of which 86 bachelor's degrees and 12 master's degrees, doctoral studies – 4. In 2022, Kazakhstan increased its annual quota places (from 5 to 50) for studying Kyrgyz citizens at Kazakhstani universities.

On May 26, 2022, during the official visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.K.Tokayev to the Kyrgyz Republic, a branch of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University was opened in Bishkek.

Kazakh-Kyrgyz University was established in 2012. The University's mission is to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and social development of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan by providing young professionals with the opportunity to receive professional higher education based on European standards.

On May 10, 2022, an agreement was signed in Ankara between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye on cooperation in the field of education. It entered into force on May 10, 2024.

This agreement provides for:

• exchange of experience of teachers, educators and heads of educational organizations;

• exchange of experience on the application of new technologies in the field of education;

• encouraging students to participate in scientific and cultural projects on a reciprocal basis;

• conducting scientific research and conferences;

• development of cooperation between educational institutions based on joint programs;

• development of cooperation in the field of youth policy.

One of the most striking examples of bilateral cooperation is the International Kazakh-Turkish University named after Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, established based on an agreement between the Governments of Kazakhstan and Türkiye dated October 31, 1992. The University is in the city of Turkestan and functions as a joint educational project of the two countries.

Also, Kazakhstan is one of the founders of the Turkic Academy, which promotes joint scientific research aimed at studying Turkic cultures, languages, and history. The Academy also supports research in the field of education and technology, which contributes to the development of joint research projects. In 2022, the chairmanship of the Scientific Council of the International Turkic Academy was transferred from Türkiye to Kazakhstan, which underlines the active participation of the country in the development of Turkic science and culture.

Kazakhstan is actively involved in these initiatives, developing online education and collaborative educational platforms for students and teachers from the TURKPA countries.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

The education sector in Kyrgyzstan has undergone significant changes in recent years aimed at improving the quality of education, increasing the availability of educational services, and adapting to the modern requirements of the global economy. The country is actively implementing educational reforms, investing in infrastructure, innovating in the learning process, and striving to improve conditions for students and educators.

On April 24, 2024, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of Azerbaijan.

Within the framework of the Twin Schools project dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Heydar Aliyev, friendly relations were established between Schools No. 20 in Bishkek and School No. 205 in Baku.

On March 14 and 15, 2024, Baku hosted an international scientific conference on "Research and preservation of the historical and cultural

heritage of the Turkic world from the point of view of UNESCO" to develop cooperation between participants in the protection, restoration, popularization, management and effective use of historical and cultural monuments and heritage sites.

On May 6, 2024, Baku hosted the Second Conference on the Common Alphabet of the Turkic world to discuss ideas and necessary new steps to promote the common alphabet.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, taking into account the current issues of the development of bilateral Kyrgyz-Turkmen relations, has sent proposals for the development of the Protocol of the 6th meeting of the Kyrgyz-Turkmen intergovernmental commission of the following nature:

• on the mutual recognition of educational documents between the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of Turkmenistan in order to implement the action plan for the implementation of agreements reached following the official visit of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic S.N. Japarov to Turkmenistan (June 27-28, 2021) for the signing of the agreement;

• organization of lectures in schools and universities about cultural values and prominent personalities of the two countries;

• Exchange of experience on digitalization of educational institutions and training in agricultural technologies for adaptation to climate change.

The Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan have signed several agreements in the field of education and science:

• Agreement on Deepening Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Health, Science, Education, Tourism and Sports (1996);

• Cooperation between educational organizations.

Several projects have been implemented in the field of school education: in 2018, a gymnasium for 630 places was opened in Oshshaar. In 2021, construction of a school began in the village of Margun, Batken region, which was completed in 2022.

Also, one of the important events of cooperation between our countries is the first international forum of rectors, held on October 3-4, 2023 as part of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In addition, on July 18-19, 2024, the second forum of higher education institutions of the two countries was held as part of the visit of the President of Kyrgyzstan to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic has developed a draft agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye on cooperation in the field of education and science and sent it for re-approval, considering the comments and recommendations of the ministries and departments of the Kyrgyz Republic. The purpose of this Agreement is to develop cooperation between the two countries in the field of education.

On October 26-27, 2023, an international conference dedicated to the introduction of the common Turkish alphabet "The integrative role of the common Turkish alphabet: scientific and social aspects" was held in Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan.

On April 7 and 8, 2023, Baku hosted the 9th meeting of the National Commission for UNESCO of the TURKSOY member states.

The cooperation of the Kyrgyz Republic with the Republic of Kazakhstan is carried out based on the following legislative framework:

- Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of training and certification of highly qualified scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel (Almaty, April 8, 1997);

- Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of science and technology (Almaty, April 8, 1997);

- Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of education (Astana, July 4, 2006);

- Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the construction of a school in the Kyrgyz Republic (Bishkek, August 22, 2012).

Currently, universities of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan are implementing joint programs within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Network University and based on inter-university agreements and memoranda.

TÜRKIYE

Türkiye actively participates in TURKPA educational initiatives and projects, which is part of a broader strategy to strengthen ties and cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries. This contribution covers a wide range of areas: from educational programs and scientific exchanges to the creation of

educational institutions and the implementation of joint projects in the field of science and technology.

As of the 2023-2024 academic year, 40,354 Azerbaijani students are studying at higher educational institutions in Türkiye, of which 604 students are studying on Turkish scholarships.

The President of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) visited Azerbaijan with an accompanying delegation from November 29 to December 5, 2021. During this visit, discussions were held to review the current state of cooperation between Türkiye and Azerbaijan and to consider efforts to establish new partnerships. In addition, it was decided at this meeting to initiate efforts to establish a joint university in Azerbaijan.

In accordance with the "Protocol on cooperation in the field of vocational education between Türkiye and Azerbaijan", signed on February 19, 2021, it is planned to open two vocational secondary schools (vocational schools).

In the 2023-2024 academic year, 2,282 Kyrgyz students are enrolled in higher education institutions in Türkiye.

To meet the educational needs of the children of Turkish citizens living in Kyrgyzstan, it was considered appropriate to open a Turkish primary and secondary school and an Imam Khatip secondary school in Bishkek with the approval of the Ministry.

The Kyrgyz-Turkish Anatolian Vocational Secondary School for Girls was opened at the beginning of the 1992-1993 academic year. Students are selected by an exam from among the candidates who have successfully completed grade 8. The training lasts a total of 4 years, including 1 year of training and 3 years of study. Every academic year, 50 female students from Kyrgyzstan are admitted to school after an exam in two grades. Turkish and English are taught in the preparatory class.; Students who graduate from the preparatory class are assigned to the faculties of clothing manufacturing technology and information technology, depending on their average grades and preferences. The school has a dormitory with a capacity of 96 people.

Graduates continue their studies at universities in Kyrgyzstan, while some also come to Türkiye for higher education at their own means as part of the Examination for International Students (YÖS), and some students receive scholarships under the Turkish Scholarships program.

The Turkish Educational Center began its educational activities on January 29, 1996 in accordance with the Ministerial Permit No. 1158. He continues his activities in the classrooms allocated by Manas University. Turkish language and Turkish culture classes are not held. As part of the

activities of the Türkiye Turkish Language Training Center, Turkish language courses are conducted mainly in higher education institutions, as well as in some secondary educational institutions. In accordance with the established cooperation protocols, the activities of the Türkiye Turkish Language Training Center for the 2023-2024 academic year will continue: Turkish language courses will be opened in cities including Bishkek, as well as Osh, Jalalabad, Karakol and Batken, in addition to Talas, Naryn, Balykchi, Ozgen and Kyzyl-Kyi. Thus, from the academic year 2023-2024, courses of the Türkiye Turkish Language Training Center were launched in all regions of Kyrgyzstan. Currently, almost 1,900 students have started learning Turkish in 81 open study groups.

In accordance with the agreement signed between the Governments of the two countries on September 30, 1995, the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University was founded in Bishkek and began its educational activities in the 1997-1998 academic year.

Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University continues its educational activities through 11 faculties, 1 higher school, 1 vocational school and 4 institutes. Students are admitted to the university from three main sources: Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye and the Turkic republics, as well as from other countries.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, 11,958 Kazakhstani students are studying at higher educational institutions in Türkiye.

The Minister, Mr. Yusuf Tekin, met with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Ankara, Mr. Yerkebulan Sapiyev, on February 5, 2024 at 3 p.m. During the meeting, the educational relations between the two countries were discussed. During the meeting, information was announced about the intention of the Kazakh company CodiPlay to transfer five digital education platforms in English and Turkish to five schools in Gaziantep, including a school to be built in the Nurdagi district. In addition, a request was made to speed up the construction of a school in Nurdagi. In addition, the Turkish side expressed a desire to open a school in Kazakhstan and the need to support this initiative.

At the request of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan, within the framework of cooperation in the field of human resources between the member countries and observers of the Organization of Turkic States, the Office of Personnel Management under the President coordinated a working visit of a delegation of state administrators from Kazakhstan to various government agencies from November 20 to 24, 2023. On November 22, 2023, the Strategy Development Department presented a report on "The National Education System," and the General Directorate of Special Education and Methodological Services presented a

presentation on "Talent Management in Schools." In addition, the delegation was assisted in visiting a school focused on vocational education.

CONCLUSION

Cooperation in the field of education between the countries of the Turkic Council is actively developing and covers a variety of areas, from academic exchanges and the creation of joint educational programs to improving the quality of education and the introduction of new technologies.

One of the most notable steps in cooperation was the creation of joint universities and educational programs. Of particular importance was the development of joint educational standards and curricula in order to unify educational systems to improve the quality of education and ensure the recognition of diplomas in all TURKPA countries. As part of these efforts, there are joint master's and doctoral programs, teacher exchange programs, as well as training courses and advanced training.

In recent years, joint scientific research and educational projects aimed at innovations in the field of pedagogy, educational technologies and methods have been actively developing. These studies help to improve the quality of education and introduce new approaches to learning. Special attention is paid to linguistic and cultural exchange, which is important for the preservation and popularization of Turkic languages and cultures.

The TURKPA countries regularly hold international conferences, symposiums, and forums where topical issues in the field of education, science and technology are discussed. These events provide a platform for sharing experiences, presenting new educational initiatives, and promoting joint projects. An important focus is to ensure access to education for all segments of the population, including people with disabilities, in rural areas and less affluent regions. TURKPA's joint projects and programs are working to improve the quality and accessibility of education in these areas.

Despite the successes, cooperation in the field of education faces several problems and challenges: differences in educational systems, economic constraints, and the quality of education.

Strengthening academic ties, creating joint educational institutions and programs, developing digital education and language exchange — all this contributes to improving the educational environment and strengthening cultural and scientific ties between the countries. Despite the challenges, the TURKPA countries continue to actively develop cooperation in the field of education, which opens new opportunities for improving cooperation and achieving unity for all countries.