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## EU AS A POTENTIAL PARTNER OF KAZAKHSTAN

*Актуальність теми дослідження полягає в обґрунтуванні ролі Європейського Союзу в міжнародних відносинах з Казахстаном – як у соціально-економічній, так і у військово-політичній сферах. У статті зроблено спробу розглянути формування відносин між Казахстаном та Європейським Союзом; проаналізувати пріоритети співпраці між ними; вивчити перспективи реалізації стратегії Європейського Союзу в Центральній Азії; виявити проблемні питання в реалізації казахстансько-європейського співробітництва.*

**Ключові слова:** *Казахстан, ЄС, співпраця, економіка, політика, стратегія.*

*The relevance of the research topic is to substantiate the role of the European Union in international relations with Kazakhstan – both in the socio-economic and military-political spheres. The article attempts to consider the formation of relations between Kazakhstan and the European Union; analyze the priorities of cooperation between them; to study the prospects for the implementation of the European Union strategy in Central Asia; identify problematic issues in the implementation of Kazakh-European cooperation.*

**Key words:** *Kazakhstan, EU, cooperation, economy, policy, strategy.*

### 1. Introduction

Today Kazakhstan and the European Union consider each other as stable partners in political, economic and other spheres. The diversity, intensity of relations, the stability of contacts at the highest level, as well as the prospects of the agreements reached indicate that the Kazakh-European partnership is reaching a strategic level.

Official political relations between the European Union and the Republic of Kazakhstan began on March 2, 1992. On the same day, the first President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, received an EU delegation headed by Vice President F. Andriassen.

On February 1-2, 1993, Nursultan Nazarbayev paid an official visit to Brussels. As a result of negotiations with EU President Jean Delors, an agreement was signed on the exchange of missions between the European Union and Kazakhstan.

In addition, Nursultan Nazarbayev's visits to Brussels in June 2000 and November 2002 gave a significant impetus to the development of relations between the European Union and Kazakhstan. He met with the High Representative of the European Union

for the Common Foreign and Security Policy – Secretary General of the Council of the European Union J. Solana and President of the European Union R. Prodi. An agreement on nuclear energy between the Government of Kazakhstan and the European Union on the issue of thermonuclear fusion was signed at the headquarters of the European Union.

And one of the important points is the results of Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Brussels on December 3-6, 2006. Our President stressed his firm intention to develop a dialogue of strategic partnership in the European direction. The EU Strategy for Central Asia, adopted on June 22, 2007, will determine the immediate future development of cooperation between the two regions.[1]

In our foreign policy, we pay special attention to counteracting modern challenges and threats. Kazakhstan will remain a firm supporter of the collective and coordinated solution of these problems. In this regard, we support the efforts of the European Union within the framework of regional programs aimed at combating global challenges.

## **2. Development of international cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European Union**

### ***2.1. Priorities of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European Union***

Today, the economic sphere is the defining sphere of our relations. The economies of the European Union and Kazakhstan often complement each other.

The development of Kazakh-European economic cooperation is largely determined by mutually beneficial interests in the oil and gas sector. The stable political and economic situation in Kazakhstan increases the importance of our country as an alternative supplier of these resources to the European Union.

The Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Cooperation, signed between Kazakhstan and the European Union in December 2006 during Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Brussels, supports the formation of a strategic energy dialogue.

The development of cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and the related uranium industry is also promising. The nuclear industry plays a special role in the fuel and energy complex of Kazakhstan as a high-tech industry.

Despite its key role in economic cooperation with the European Union, Kazakhstan will not be limited to energy and transport issues. In this regard, we support the decision of the European Commission to include Kazakhstan in the European Competitiveness and Innovation Framework.

Technical assistance is an integral part of the European Union's system of economic cooperation with countries that are just building their market economies. The strategic role of Kazakhstan in the region will contribute to the active implementation of relevant EU programs.

There is no doubt that these factors will contribute to the development of our economic ties and more active integration of Kazakhstan into the world economy.

The main direction of cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is education, which, among other things, will contribute to the development of human relations and the enhancement of cultural ties between our peoples. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the European Union to support the ongoing educational reforms in our country, including the development of vocational education. This connection will help us bring our system in line with European and global educational standards. It should be noted that Kazakhstan participates in a number of projects in the field of education in European countries.

Today, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the European Union recognize each other as a reliable strategic partner, ready to develop long-term and comprehensive relations that are beneficial not only for themselves, but also for other countries and the international community. The success of Kazakh-European cooperation confirms the correctness of the foreign policy priorities we have chosen.

## ***2.2. Formation of Kazakhstan as a strategic partner of the EU***

The European Union is a strategic partner of Kazakhstan. We have created a multi-level support system. For the past twenty years, the European Union has been supporting Kazakhstan in various fields.

Bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and the European Union have been successfully developing since independence. Trade and economic turnover has increased significantly, cooperation in the field of international politics, security and defense has reached a high level. Thanks to its natural resources and agriculture, Kazakhstan has become a key and important partner of the EU in Central Asia.

The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan welcomes the integration processes taking place in Europe.

The development of bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the European Union is given a special place. The development of political, economic and cultural relations of the Republic with the EU and with the countries of Western Europe is one of the priorities in the foreign policy of Kazakhstan [2, p.10].

As the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev said in the historical document “Kazakhstan-2030”: “... the unconditional priority in the work to ensure national security belongs to our foreign policy and the formation of a dense fabric of mutually beneficial relations between Kazakhstan and our neighbors and leading countries of the world” [3] the foreign policy sphere is a priority in the state system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The foreign policy doctrine of Kazakhstan from the very beginning was aimed at creating a favorable environment for internal development, at the needs of the economy in terms of providing investment resources.

Kazakhstan is the largest trade and investment partner of the EU in Central Asia. The main consumers of Kazakh exports are Italy, France, the Netherlands and Germany. At the same time, it should be noted that Kazakhstan is considered by the EU coun-

tries as a country that supplies energy and minerals to the West. Oil and oil products, base metals, agricultural, chemical and mineral products, textiles, etc. predominate in the structure of Kazakhstani exports to the EU countries. Already at the very beginning of 2004, the trade turnover between Kazakhstan and the EU amounted to 10.5 billion dollars [4, p.136].

Thus, cooperation with the European Union, which occupies a leading position in world politics and economics, is given a special place in the foreign policy of Kazakhstan.

### **3. Future of EU cooperation with Kazakhstan**

#### ***3.1. The new stage in the development of cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan***

Prospects for the development of relations between Kazakhstan and the EU are largely related to the interest of both sides.

Kazakhstan is interested in cooperation with European states:

First, the European Union is an association of economically, politically and socially integrated states. This integration in developed European countries is still in the process of convergence.

Secondly, the EU member has its own place in the international division of labor, its own special interests. Protecting their national interests prevents them from fully uniting.

Thirdly, EU countries have different levels of development. In particular, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which later joined the EU, have a low level of development. The EU is supported by such powerful economic powers as Germany and France.

Fourth, the EU closely links its policy on global issues with the protection of US national interests. The United States and the European Union are not only economic but also military alliances.

A feature of the current stage of relations between Kazakhstan and the EU is the readiness of both sides to review the existing cooperation strategies, taking into account the prevailing transcontinental realities.

New European initiatives within the framework of the Strategy for the CAR countries are associated by a number of European experts with the need to adopt its new version with a clearer list of real EU tasks in the CAR, aimed at:

- strengthening comprehensive cooperation with Kazakhstan as a key country in the region, setting itself the task of strengthening ties with the EU and acquiring a new quality in the light of successful representation in the OSCE;

- Ensuring European energy security, diversifying energy supplies in the face of the existing danger of losing the leading positions of the EU in the regional market and, in this regard, harmonizing the European energy policy with the energy policy of the countries of the region;

- implementation of a new concept of regional cooperation with the CAR countries in the direction of developing relations with neighboring countries located outside the region of Eastern Europe, Russia, China, South Asia [4, p.141].

Kazakhstan and the EU are ready for a new stage in the development of relations, both economic, social and political. Our country has a clear position on the prospects for cooperation with the countries of the European Union, which remains a key partner.

Kazakhstan and the EU are mutually interested in strengthening partnership and are ready to change and adjust the economic strategies of cooperation. The common strategic interests of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the EU in Eurasia are associated with two continental projects, in the implementation of which both parties are interested to some extent: a single Eurasian continental project and a single integrated space project in Central Asia [5].

Considering that the European Union is a confederation of equal and independent states, Kazakhstan is building a two-level system of relations: with the union as a whole, and with each state separately. At the same time, both levels complement each other, which is reflected in various signed agreements and implemented projects.

### ***3.2. Kazakhstan's door to new opportunities with the EU***

It should be noted that the Parliament magazine published an article by the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in which he claims that his country has established itself as an exceptionally reliable partner for the European Union, and hopes that his visit to Brussels “will open the door to new opportunities” [6].

As for the visit of the President of Kazakhstan to Belgium, Tokayev met with King Philip in Brussels and discussed issues of bilateral political, trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation.

Following the meeting with Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, it was decided to create an intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation to intensify economic ties. They also discussed the issue of countering the coronavirus pandemic. Tokayev proposed to establish cooperation between the national holding QazBioPharm and the recently created Belgian biopharmaceutical platform.

From business circles, the head of state met with Wolfgang Kropp, president of the German group of companies Svevind Group – this company intends to implement the HyrAsia One project for the production of “green” hydrogen in the Mangistau region. With the Chairman of the Board of the Belgian company Joh Cockerill, Jean-Luc Moranger, the president discussed the prospects for investment projects aimed at modernizing railway locomotives and using renewable energy sources.

The program of the official visit of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Brussels ended with negotiations with the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

As a result, Kazakhstan considers Belgium as an important political and economic partner in the European Union. A relatively small country is the sixth largest investor

in the republic's economy. Since 2005, Belgian investment has totaled \$9.3 billion. Despite the pandemic, the volume of mutual trade grew by 13%, exceeding \$300 million. In Kazakhstan, there are 65 legal entities, branches and representative offices with the participation of Belgian capital [7].

#### **4. Conclusion**

To conclude, modern integration processes in international relations underlie global trends and patterns of development. In the 21st century, the joint solution of global and regional problems is associated with the requirements of the process of integration and globalization, which means that no state can solve its problems alone. In fact, the whole world today can be explained by a set of integration associations, unions and groups. The most important integration association is the European Union.

As mentioned above, Kazakhstan is the EU's largest trade and investment partner in Central Asia. A special place will be given to the development of bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the European Union. The development of political, economic and cultural relations of the republic with the EU and with the countries of Western Europe is one of the priorities of Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

Relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the EU have acquired a stable and long-term character: Kazakhstan has found support from the EU on issues such as healthcare, social sphere, scientific research, reforms in the republic, market structure, status quo. And the EU also found the support of the Kazakh side as a strategic partner.

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