



MEDIA HANDBOOK

On the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

**Nur-Sultan
September 2022**

Media handbook for representatives of foreign media

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Dear journalists,

This media handbook has been prepared to provide you with all the necessary information on the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and the state visit of Pope Francis to Kazakhstan.

The Seventh Congress, taking place on September 14-15 in Nur-Sultan, welcomes approximately 100 delegations from more than 50 countries, including representatives of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and other religions. President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, will also participate in the event. It also marks the first visit by the Head of the Catholic Church to Kazakhstan since Pope John Paul II travelled to our country in September 2001.

This handbook includes the schedule of the Seventh Congress and Pope Francis' itinerary in Kazakhstan, background information on the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, biographies of relevant people, as well as useful information on Kazakhstan and Nur-Sultan, including recent political reforms and the referendum on constitutional changes. You will also find the contact details of the press centres and individuals responsible for media engagement should you require further information during your time in Kazakhstan.

We thank you for your interest in covering the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and wish you a pleasant and rewarding trip to our country.

Yours sincerely,

Committee for International Information

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Republic of Kazakhstan

Agenda of the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

“The role of leaders of world and traditional religions in the spiritual and social development of humanity in the post-pandemic period”

As the world recovers from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and aims to navigate current geopolitical challenges, the upcoming 7th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions is taking on increased importance.

The Congress will offer a genuine opportunity to facilitate a global atmosphere of peace and tolerance, as several high-ranking religious leaders are expected to attend, including Pope Francis, Grand Imam of al-Azhar Ahmed el-Tayeb, Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, and many other spiritual leaders.

Session 1:

The Role of Religions in Strengthening Spiritual and Moral Values in the Modern World.

Session 2:

The Role of Education and Religious Studies in Respectful Coexistence of Religions and Cultures, and in Strengthening Peace and Harmony.

Session 3:

The Contribution of Religious Leaders and Politicians in Promoting Global Interreligious Dialogue and Peace, Countering Extremism, Radicalism and Terrorism.

Session 4:

Women's Contribution to the Well-Being and Sustainable Development of Contemporary Society and the Role of Religious Communities in Supporting Women's Social Status.

The **official website** of the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions: <https://religions-congress.org/en/home>

The **official Twitter account** of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions: <https://twitter.com/religionscongkz>

Information on the state visit of Pope Francis to Kazakhstan

Pope Francis' visit Kazakhstan will coincide with his participation in the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

The Pope initially spoke about this possibility in early April during a live video conversation with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

On the return flight from his Apostolic Visit to Canada in July, the Pope reiterated his hope to go. "For the moment, I would like to go to Kazakhstan. That wouldn't be too rigorous of a journey," he said.

He reaffirmed his interest in being present at the congress of religions and observed that it would likely not be overly physically demanding.

The last and only Pope to visit Kazakhstan was Pope St. John Paul II in 2001, who travelled there under the motto "Love One Another."

Summary of Pope's Itinerary in Kazakhstan

Tuesday, 13 September

Upon landing in Kazakhstan on Tuesday 13 September, he will pay a courtesy visit to the Kazakh President and will address authorities and civil society at the Formal Speech.

Wednesday, 14 September

On Wednesday, he will have a moment of silent prayer with religious leaders, and address them during the Congress' opening and plenary session. The Pope will then meet with some of the leaders privately. In the afternoon, he will celebrate Mass for the country's Catholics and many pilgrims who will travel from abroad.

Thursday, 15 September

On Thursday, the Pope will address bishops, priests, religious, pastoral workers, and seminarians, and will also meet with the country's Jesuits. He will also give another address at the conclusion of the Congress, during which there will be the reading of the event's final declaration. Pope Francis will return to Rome at about 8:15 pm local time on Thursday evening.

Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Kazakhstan
(13 - 15 September 2022)

TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2022	
07:15	Departure by airplane from Rome/Fiumicino International Airport to Nur-Sultan
17:45	Arrival at the Nur-Sultan International Airport
18:30	Official welcome Welcome ceremony at the Presidential Palace in Nur-Sultan
18:45	Courtesy visit to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
19:30	Meeting with the authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps at the Central Concert Hall "Qazaqstan" Formal speech of the Holy Father
WEDNESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2022	
10:00	Silent prayer of religious leaders Opening and plenary session of the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions
12.00	Private meetings with various religious leaders
16.45	Holy Mass at the EXPO-2017 site Homily of the Holy Father

THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2022

9.00	Private meeting with members of the Society of Jesus at the Apostolic nunciature
10:30	Meeting with bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, seminarians and pastoral workers in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral
15.00	Reading of the final Declaration and conclusion of the Congress
16.15	Farewell ceremony at the Nur-Sultan International Airport
16.45	Departure by airplane from the Nur-Sultan International Airport to Rome

Relations between the Holy See and Kazakhstan

Dialogue has been the focus of the good relations the Catholic Church and the Holy See have entertained with Kazakhstan since 1992, after the country became independent from the former Soviet Union. This dialogue is of particular relevance today in the context of the global political tensions.

October 17, 2022, marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan shares the global vision of the Catholic Church based on the ideals of goodness, justice, solidarity and compassion. The Catholic Church welcomes Kazakhstan's role in fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

In 1998, Kazakhstan was the first country in Central Asia to sign an Agreement on Mutual Relations with the Holy See. Based on that Agreement, the cooperation between Holy See and Kazakhstan has been growing dynamically ever since. In 2001, Kazakhstan was the first country in Central Asia to be visited by Pope St. John Paul II.

Today, the Vatican and Kazakhstan continue to work together. This is evidenced by the agreements reached during the official visit to the Vatican of H.E. Mr.

Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, on May 30-31, 2022. As part of the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding between the University Medical Centre of Kazakhstan and Bambino Gesù Hospital, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding between the R.B. Suleimenov Institute of Eastern Studies and the Vatican Library were signed. In addition, subject to the outcome of ongoing negotiations, the Holy See and the Government of Kazakhstan look forward to signing an Agreement on granting visas and residence permits to members of the Catholic Church.

Press Centres and Information Structure

- QAZEXPO CONGRESS CENTER

53/2 Mangilik El ave. 010000, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Main Press Centre for the Congress

- PALACE OF INDEPENDENCE

Tauelsizdik Ave 52, Nur-Sultan 010000, Kazakhstan

THE PROGRAM
of the Seventh Congress of Leaders of
World and Traditional Religions
(September 13-15, 2022, Nur-Sultan)

MEETING OF THE XX CONGRESS SECRETARIAT
(TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13)

10.00-12.00	XX session of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions <i>Venue: Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, Atrium Hall</i>
14.00-18.00	Reserve time / Cultural program
18.00-19.20	Abai opera <i>Venue: Astana Opera</i>
19.30-20.30	Buffet dinner for delegates <i>Venue: Astana Opera, Baroque Hall, 2nd floor</i>

**OPENING AND PLENARY SESSION OF THE SEVENTH
CONGRESS OF LEADERS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL
RELIGIONS**
(WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14)

10.00-10.03	Opening of the Congress A minute of silence for prayer <i>Venue: Independence Palace</i>
10.03-11.20	Plenary session: The Role of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in the Spiritual and Social Development of Human Civilization in the Post-Pandemic Period <i>Venue: Independence Palace</i>
	Welcoming remarks by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart TOKAYEV
	Welcoming remarks by heads of delegations <u><i>Time limit - up to 12 minutes</i></u>

11.20-11.30	The ceremony of awarding the Astana International Prize for Contribution to Interreligious Dialogue and the Honorary Medal of the Congress.
11.30-11.45	Group photo <i>Venue: Independence Palace</i> <i>Format: <u>heads of delegations only</u></i>
11.45-13.15	Continuation of the Plenary Session <i>(statements by heads of delegations, time limit – up to 10 minutes)</i>
13.15-14.30	Lunch <i>Venue: Restaurant located in the Independence Palace</i>
14.30-17.00	Continuation of the Plenary Session
SESSION AND CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF LEADERS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS <i>(THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15)</i>	
09.15-09.45	Tree planting ceremony in the Park of Peace and Reconciliation
10.00-11.30	Sessions <i>Venue: Independence Palace, 1st floor, Halls No.1, No.2</i>
	Hall No.1. Section 1: The Role of Religions in Strengthening Spiritual and Moral Values in the Modern World
	Hall No.2. Section 2: The Role of Education and Religious Studies in Respectful Coexistence of Religions and Cultures, and in Strengthening Peace and Harmony
11.30-12.00	Refreshment break
12.00-13.30	Continuation of the plenary sessions <i>Venue: Independence Palace, 1st floor, Halls No.1, No.2</i>

	Hall No.1. Section 3: The Contribution of Religious Leaders and Politicians in Promoting Global Interreligious Dialogue and Peace, Countering Extremism, Radicalism and Terrorism
	Hall No.2. Section 4: Women's Contribution to the Well-being and Sustainable Development of Contemporary Society and the Role of Religious Communities in Supporting Women's Social Status
13.30-15.00	Lunch <i>Venue: Independence Palace</i>
15.00-16.00	Closing ceremony of the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions <i>Venue: Independence Palace</i>
	Opening of the ceremony by Maulen ASHIMBAEV, the Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan
	Announcement of the Final Document of the Seventh Congress - <u>Declaration</u>
	Statements by heads of the delegation <i>Time limit - up to 12 minutes</i>
	Conclusion of the results of the Congress by the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart TOKAYEV
	Closing of the Congress by Maulen ASHIMBAEV, the Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan

Background information on the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

Overview

The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has taken place every three years in the capital of Kazakhstan since 2003, gathers global religious and political leaders.

The Congress was established at the initiative of Kazakhstan's first President Nursultan Nazarbayev in direct response to the rise in religious tensions and extremism following the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States. Nazarbayev believed it was critical to create the opportunity for religious leaders to work together to prevent religion being used to divide people, communities and nations.

International global leaders, including Kofi Annan, George W. Bush, Margaret Thatcher, Jiang Zemin, Nelson Mandela, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Mikhail Gorbachev, among many others, supported the initiative to create and hold the Congress.

The First Congress was attended by 17 delegations from 23 countries and focused mainly on countering terrorism and religious extremism issues threatening world peace. On that occasion, Pope St. John Paul II, who had visited Kazakhstan in September 2001, sent a message to participants expressing hope that the initiative might help promote the respect of human dignity and the protection of religious freedom.

Meanwhile, the previous Congress was held in October 2018 and focused on the theme "Religious Leaders for a Safe World". 82 delegations from 46 countries participated in the event. Among the topics discussed were the relationship between religion and globalisation and, again, the role of religious leaders in overcoming extremism and terrorism.

High-profile attendees of previous Congresses included then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Shimon Peres of Israel, and King Abdullah of Jordan with discussions centring on the role of religion in promoting development and how to counter the deliberate appeal of the violent extremisms to young people.

The importance of the Congress

- It strengthens the interfaith dialogue by bringing religious leaders together. It enables a meaningful dialogue on ways to combine efforts to promote better understanding
- It provides opportunities for improved dialogue between representatives of different cultures and religions including those from the mass media, youth associations, academia and the arts
- It deepens and strengthens mutual understanding and respect among different religious communities
- It develops tolerance and mutual respect in contrast to the ideology of hatred and extremism
- In 2018, the number of attendees at the VI Congress increased almost five-fold compared to 2003, with 82 participating delegations. Its growing popularity can be attributed to the fact that the Congress has made a valuable contribution not only in interfaith and interethnic relations, but also in the field of global security, particularly in the context of tackling religious extremism and terrorism
- For almost two decades the Congress has facilitated global dialogue between religions and nations and played a major role in promoting mutual understanding and respect in societies and countries. As the world enters a period of political uncertainty, this mission is in demand more than ever

Major achievements of the Congress

- The Congress has facilitated global dialogue between religions and nations and played a major role in promoting mutual understanding and respect in societies and countries
- Its contribution to promoting dialogue and understanding was recognised in 2004 by a United Nations General Assembly Resolution
- At the initiative of the Congress, the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly declared 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

Main priorities of the Congress

- The establishment of peace, harmony and tolerance as the unshakable principles of human existence

- Achievement of mutual respect and tolerance between religions, confessions, nations and ethnic groups
- Preventing the escalation of conflicts and hostilities due to religious feelings

Main objectives of the Congress

- Strengthen the traditions of inter-religious and inter-confessional dialogue
- Strengthen cooperation with all international organisations and structures aimed at promoting dialogue between religions, cultures and civilizations
- Expand the dialogue between representatives of different cultures and religions with the involvement of representatives of secular and religious media, youth associations, scientific and creative intelligentsia
- Deepen and strengthen mutual understanding and respect among religious communities
- Develop a culture of tolerance and mutual respect as a counterbalance to the ideology of hatred and extremism
- Promote global dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions

Background information on previous Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

First Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

Astana (the previous name of the capital of Kazakhstan) hosted the first Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions on September 23 and 24 in 2003. The congress was attended by 17 delegations from 23 countries. The forum focused mainly on countering terrorism and extremism.

Second Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

Astana hosted the second Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions on September 12 and 13 in 2006, which was attended by delegations from 29 countries. The congress was held in a new building designed for the event, the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation. The central topic of discussion was "Religion, Society and International Security."

Third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

Astana hosted the third Congress on July 1-2, 2009. Approximately 400 delegates from 35 countries attended the event. The central theme of the congress was "The role of religious leaders in building a world based on tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation."

Fourth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

The fourth Congress took place in Astana on May 30-31, 2012. 85 delegations from 40 countries attended the congress on "Peace and Harmony as the Choice of Mankind."

Fifth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

The fifth Congress was held on June 10-11, 2015. The theme was "Dialogue of Religious Leaders and Politicians in the Name of Peace and Development". 80 delegations from 42 countries attended the event, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Jordan's King Abdullah II.

Sixth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

The sixth Congress was held in Astana on October 10-11, 2018. Its theme was "Religious Leaders for a Safe World." 82 delegations from 46 countries participated in the event.

Information on the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

The Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions is the working agency of the Congress.

The Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan is the Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

The members of the Secretariat are made up of representatives of the leaders of world religions participating in the Congress, including the representatives of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism, Hinduism, as well as international organisations.

The Secretariat meets annually to discuss the following:

- Implementation of decisions of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions
- The preparation of the sessions of the Congress
- The global agenda, work regulations, draft final documents of the Congress (Declarations)
- Coordination of interaction with international structures on issues of interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue.

Kazakhstan's representatives of the Secretariat

Maulen Ashimbayev, Chairperson of the Senate of the of Kazakhstan, Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Akan Rakhmetullin, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the Congress.

Serik Yegizbayev, Vice-Minister of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan, Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

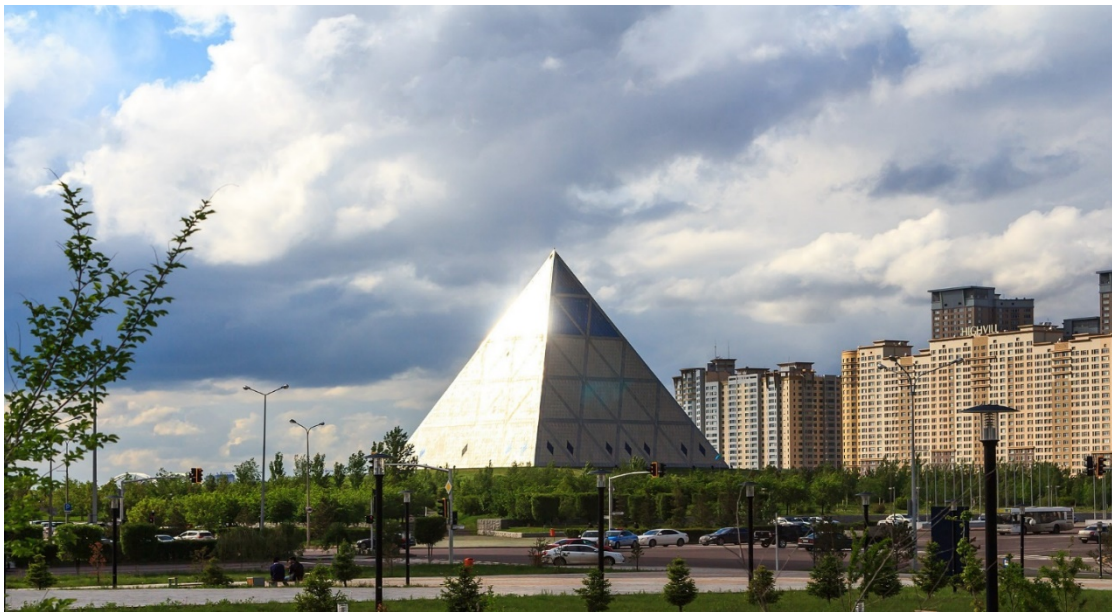
Bulat Sarsenbayev, Chair of the Board of the N. Nazarbayev Centre for the Development of Interfaith and Inter-civilizational Dialogue, Commissioner for promoting the goals and objectives of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Background information on religious and ethnic relations in Kazakhstan

Ethnic and religious unity in the country

- Kazakhstan is a religiously diverse and secular state that guarantees freedom of worship and religion to each of its almost 18 religious' denominations.
- Kazakhstan's multicultural society is made up of 19.2 million people. There are approximately 3,200 places of worship and around 4,000 religious associations in Kazakhstan today.
- Kazakhstan's latest census in 2021 showed that the ethnic structure of Kazakh society is 70% Kazakh, 18% Russian, 3% Uzbek, 1.4% Ukrainian, 1.4% Uighur, 1.08% Tatar, 0.95% German and 4% others.
- Though Islam is the biggest religion (approximately 70%), followers of all faiths or none live in harmony with each other, safeguarded by the Constitution of Kazakhstan which guarantees the right and freedom to choose one's own religion or belief of any kind. This is evidenced by the fact that a number of religious associations work in Kazakhstan, some of which are banned in other countries, including Jehovah's Witnesses, Moon's Unification Church, and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- In the 30 years since Kazakhstan's independence, the country has worked diligently to build an inclusive society which promotes interfaith dialogue and religious harmony – a feat recognised and welcomed by international organisations including the United Nations, UNESCO, the World Islamic League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.
- Kazakhstan has managed to create its own unique model of society, where ethnic and religious tolerance have become the cornerstone in building a prosperous state.
- Given the country's success in this field, promotion of this unique model of interethnic and interfaith harmony in the international arena is an ongoing priority of the country's foreign policy, particularly as Kazakhstan has been an active contributor to global efforts to find solutions to diplomatic crises.
- As President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in 2019, Kazakhstan has become a global centre for dialogue between religions and civilizations.

Background information on the Palace of Peace and Harmony



The Palace of Peace and Harmony was constructed in 2006 to host the triennial Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Key facts about the Palace:

- The building is also described as the Pyramid.
- It is designed by architectural practice Foster and Partners, and surmounted by a modern stained-glass apex by architectural artist Brian Clarke.
- The project was conceived as a permanent venue for the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which meets triennially in a purpose-built conference chamber at the apex of the pyramid.
- In 2011 and 2013, the International Astana Action Film Festival was held in the Palace.
- The pyramid portion of the building is 62 metres high and sits on a 15-metre-high earth-covered block.
- The Pyramid of Peace expresses the spirit of Kazakhstan, where cultures, traditions and representatives of various nationalities coexist in peace, harmony and accord.
- Bathed in the golden and pale blue glow of the stained glass (colours taken from the Kazakhstan flag), hundreds of delegates from the world's main religions and faiths meet every three years in a circular chamber based on the United Nations Security Council meeting room in New York.
- This year, the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions will be held in another location – the Independence Palace.

Biographies of relevant people

Maulen Ashimbayev

Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions



Date of birth	28 January 1971
Place of birth	Almaty, Kazakhstan
Education	- Al-Farabi Kazakh National University; - Tufts University, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (United States)
Position	Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan
Previous positions	- First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration of Kazakhstan - Assistant to the President of Kazakhstan - First Deputy Chairperson of the Nur Otan Party - Deputy of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Language skills	Kazakh, Russian, English
Additional information	Awarded with the Order of Qurmet, Certificate of Merit of the Republic of Kazakhstan and anniversary medals.
Social Media	https://kz.linkedin.com/in/maulen-ashimbayev-074084110 https://www.instagram.com/maulen_ashimbayev/

Akan Rakhmetullin
First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan

***Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and
Traditional Religions***



Date of birth	2 February 1967
Place of Birth	Almaty, Kazakhstan
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Alma-Ata Energetics Institute- Diplomatic Academy of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry
Position	First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan
Previous positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan;- Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kazakhstan to Pakistan;
Language skills	Kazakh, Russian, English, Urdu
Social Media	https://instagram.com/akanrakhmetullin?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y= https://www.facebook.com/akan.rakhmetullin

Roman Vassilenko
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan



Date of birth	14 August 1972
Place of Birth	Shymkent city, Kazakhstan
Education	- Military Academy of Economics, Finance and Law of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation
Position	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan
Previous places of work	- Diplomat at embassies of Kazakhstan in the US and UK; - Ambassador-at-large at the Kazakh Foreign Ministry; - Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Slovakia;
Language skills	English, French, Vietnamese, Slovak
Social Media	https://instagram.com/romanvassilenko?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y= https://twitter.com/romanvassilenko?s=11 https://www.facebook.com/roman.vassilenko

Serik Yegizbayev
Vice-Minister of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan

***Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and
Traditional Religions***



Date of birth	22 April 1963
Place of Birth	Ural region, Kazakhstan
Education	- West Kazakhstan Agricultural Institute - Academy of Civil Service under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Position	Vice-Minister of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan
Previous places of work	- Deputy Akim of the West Kazakhstan region; - Head of the Office of the Ministry of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan
Language skills	Kazakh, Russian

Bulat Sarsenbayev
***Chairman of the N. Nazarbayev Centre for the Development of Interfaith
and Inter-civilization Dialogue***



Date of birth	17 July 1957
Place of Birth	Almaty, Kazakhstan
Education	- Alma-Ata Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages - Al-Farabi Kazakh State University - Course participant of the University of London on the course "International Law".
Position	Chairman of the Board of the Nazarbayev Centre for the Development of Interfaith and Inter-civilization Dialogue
Previous places of work	- Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan - Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Jordan - Ambassador of Kazakhstan to India
Language skills	Kazakh, Russian, English
Additional Information	Awarded with the Order of Qurmet, the medal of Independence of the first degree («Wisam al-Istiqial», Jordan), the «Gold Medal for Merit» (Palestine).
Social Media	https://www.facebook.com/bulat.sarsenbayev

The N. Nazarbayev Centre for Development of Interfaith and Inter-civilization Dialogue was established to promote peace and harmony between all religions in an atmosphere of mutual respect and to ensure continuous engagement with domestic and foreign religious associations and their spiritual leaders. The Centre organises and conducts the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Nazym Zhangazinova
Official representative of the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions



Date of birth	8 February 1989
Place of Birth	Almaty, Kazakhstan
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management, University of International Business - London Training for Excellence
Position	Official representative of the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions
Previous places of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official representative of the ADAL political party; - Official representative of ARNAU Dimash Kudaibergen's concert tour in New York (USA), St. Petersburg (Russia), Moscow (Russia), Kyiv (Ukraine); - EXPO, communication support of the Hungarian Pavilion. - BAQYTTY BALA, communication support of the International Children's Vocal Festival-Competition in Aktobe Region.
Language skills	Kazakh, Russian, English
Additional Information	Founder of the communication boutique agency NazymPR.
Social Media	https://instagram.com/nazym_zhangazy?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Recent media articles on the Congress of Leaders Of World And Traditional Religions

Women's crucial role in achieving interfaith harmony and social well-being

By Lazzat Ramazanova

*Deputy Chairperson of the Presidential National Commission on Women Affairs and
Demographic Policy of Kazakhstan*

[Lithuania Tribune](#)

Published on 14 June 2022

Despite many efforts to progress women equality agenda globally, there is a lot more that yet needs to be done. While promotion of gender equality in business, politics and social sectors often makes the headlines, one area that is rarely considered is equality in the sphere of interfaith work, religious dialogue and in connection with this is the contribution of women to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Religion has historically been more associated with men. This is unsurprising given that for years women have struggled to gain equality in all areas of life—from the home to the workplace, and especially in positions of leadership. Yet religion plays a significant role in the lives of women. In the United States alone, 86% of women are affiliated with a religion, with 63% saying that religion is important in their lives.

Women can play a significant role as peacemakers, supporters of nonviolence and tolerance, and contribute to interfaith harmony and dialogue between different cultures and civilizations. An International Peace Institute study of 182 signed peace agreements between 1989 and 2011 found that when women are included in peace processes, there is a 35 percent increase in the probability that a peace agreement will last 15 years or more. Evidence indicates that female participants in peace processes are usually focused less on the spoils of the war and more on reconciliation, economic development, education and transitional justice – all critical elements of a sustained peace. Yet despite these positive statistics, women are often excluded from formal peace processes. Between 1992 and 2019, women constituted, on average, 13 percent of negotiators, 6 percent of mediators, and 6 percent of signatories in major peace processes around the world. In this regard, it is important to note that Kazakhstan adopted its first National Action Plan on UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security agenda in December 2021.

It is therefore vital that societies promote the inclusion of women in efforts to build bridges between communities and countries, particularly those with varying religious beliefs and ethnicities.

On 14-15 September, Kazakhstan will host the VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. While the event will primarily focus on the role of faith leaders in the socio-spiritual development of humanity in the post-pandemic period, one of the sections of the Congress is dedicated to the contribution of women to the well-being and sustainable development of society. The objective is to find ways for religious leaders to make and consider proposals on promoting the role of women. This year's Congress will be significant with several high-ranking religious leaders are expected to attend, including Pope Francis, Grand Imam of al-Azhar Ahmed el-Tayeb, Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel David Lau, and Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel Yitzhak Yosef, as well as many other spiritual leaders. This level of participation creates an important opportunity to facilitate the creation of a global atmosphere of peace and tolerance.

Over the last few years, Kazakhstan has made significant efforts to promote gender equality in society with positive results. Women make up 48.1 percent of the workforce in the country and 48.9 percent of workers. Women are highly represented in businesses. The number of women-led businesses increased by 9.1 percent over the year and reached 625,100 companies by the end of 2021. The number of female entrepreneurs under 29 also increased by 37.2 percent and reached 88,700 people. Women's entrepreneurship contributes about 40 percent to the country's GDP. The progress achieved to date showcases women's importance and meaningful contribution to the economy.

There is, of course, room for improvement. For example, in terms of the gender pay gap, men earn 21.7 percent more than women in similar sectors. Nevertheless, the government of Kazakhstan has made the promotion and protection of women a top priority. Last year, President Tokayev signed a decree "On further measures of Kazakhstan in the field of human rights," which includes eliminating discrimination against women. The discussion of the role of women at the upcoming Congress is very much in line with the government's priorities.

Kazakhstan is also home to approximately 140 ethnicities and representatives of 18 religious groups. Such level of diversity in the country has encouraged us to convene the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has been held in Kazakhstan since 2003.

As the role of women in society continues to expand and gender equality becomes a greater goal, it is important to ensure that women are also able to play a key role in interfaith work, as well as in peacebuilding and mediation. To

resolve many of the current global challenges, including geopolitical crises and ongoing conflicts, it is necessary to utilise women's skills. While just one event will not solve this issue outright, the upcoming VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions will contribute to consolidating efforts in achieving progress in eliminating gender imbalance in religion and developing new ideas and recommendations on expanding the role of women.

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Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions is Important For Dialogue and Cooperation Between Nations and Religions

*By Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade
Chairman of the Muslim Board of Caucasus*

[Astana Times](#)

Published on 16 August 2022

The fraternal countries of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are united by common ethnic roots, language, history, religion, culture, as well as historical traditions of interethnic and interreligious tolerance. The countries are located at the crossroads of world civilizations, therefore the preservation of the religious and cultural diversity of nations is an important part of our countries' policy. Praise be to Allah, both in Kazakhstan and in Azerbaijan all conditions have been created to ensure and develop multiculturalism, interreligious peace and cooperation. Considering these factors, Kazakhstan, in particular, initiated the creation of the Congress of World and Traditional Religions. This idea naturally comes from the way of life and traditions of our societies, in which people of different nationalities and religions live in peace and harmony for many centuries.

As a result, this event, which is attended by influential religious figures, representatives of international organizations, scientific and public circles, is held in Kazakhstan – a country where mutual understanding and tolerance reign. Kazakhstan, connecting East and West through the historical corridor of the Silk Road, makes an invaluable contribution not only to the expansion of economic cooperation, but also to the development of relations between religions and civilizations. The atmosphere of tolerance that has been formed over the centuries, the ethnic and cultural diversity that has been preserved, and the support for the national and spiritual solidarity of the Turkic-speaking peoples, as well as their socio-political stability, is a historical achievement in ensuring the sustainable and successful development of Kazakhstan.

The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions plays an important role in the development of dialogue and cooperation between peoples and religions. As a permanent participant of the Congress and a member of its Secretariat, I want to emphasize one important distinguishing feature of this forum. The congress is a permanent platform not only for dialogue between spiritual leaders, but also for meetings and exchange of views between politicians, public figures and representatives of religions.

It should be noted, unfortunately, that cases of ideological and practical threats such as xenophobia, Islamophobia, Christianophobia and anti-Semitism are growing in the world, which are serious obstacles to international stability and security. Today, calls for hatred that provoke aggression, violence and discrimination have become a real political and social threat. As a result of the ideological impact of such appeals, stability in various regions is undermined, which leads to a split and conflicts between people, war crimes, and genocide.

It is the duty of every political and religious leader to refrain from making speeches that incite hatred and confrontation under the pretext of freedom of speech and democracy. I believe that as religious, political, scientific and public figures, having shown solidarity at the seventh Congress, we will strongly condemn in the final document all forms and manifestations of terrorism, incitement to hatred, xenophobia, the use of religion for personal or political purposes, as well as acts of extremism against believers in churches, mosques, synagogues and other religious temples, and will lift up our voices of protest against insults to religious symbols and shrines.

In the speeches heard at the sixth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, held in October 2018 in Astana, as well as in the documents adopted by the Congress, we emphasized and highlighted in detail the special role of religions in achieving peace and security, mutual understanding and solidarity between people in a changing world. At that time, we did not yet know what adversities we would encounter in the near future. We could not imagine that global threats and dangers, among which is the challenge of climate change, would be supplemented by a new disaster that has shaken the entire world – COVID-19.

Preparations for the seventh congress are taking place precisely at a challenging time, when the whole world, including the religious sphere, is forced to adapt to new conditions of life, when cooperation between the state and religion has become of particular importance in overcoming threats, challenges and problems, as well as their consequences.

We are confident that Kazakhstan, as noted by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, will continue to do everything possible for peace and stability on the planet and will continue to ensure the activities of the congress, filling it with new content. I am convinced – and have always emphasized this – that it is possible to achieve real results in the struggle against the negative trends taking place in the modern world only with the direct cooperation of government, public and religious figures. At many international events, in particular, at the 19th meeting of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, held in October of 2021, I have repeatedly emphasized the relevance of this historically significant initiative for the development of dialogue between religions and civilizations, put forward by Kazakhstan 19 years ago. The main thing that reflects the historical significance of the Congress is that this initiative was the first in the modern world, a qualitatively new platform for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, which brought together political, public figures and religious leaders.

We express our deep gratitude to President Tokayev for the implementation of the mission from the highest level, which aims to unite the efforts of representatives of world and traditional religions, and statesmen and public figures for achieving peace and security throughout the world. Friendly relations between President Tokayev and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev enjoy overwhelming approval from our communities. The fraternal greetings of the leader of Kazakhstan on Azerbaijan's victory in the Patriotic War were received with great gratitude.

Praise be to Allah, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have ample opportunities for further cooperation and deepening of both bilateral and multilateral relations for the development and promotion of common cultural and spiritual values in all areas of mutual interest, in particular, within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States. In this regard, it should be noted that thanks to the comprehensive support of Kazakhstan, the idea of creating a Council of religious leaders of the member countries of the Organization of Turkic States has become real and is close to its final implementation. We consider this our common moral insight, since the promotion of the contribution of the Turkic-Islamic spiritual and cultural heritage to world civilization is of great importance.

We are confident that the independence and statehood of Kazakhstan will be increasingly strengthened, and that the brotherly Kazakh people will continue to follow on the path of progress, relying on the unity of the state and people. We also rely on the will of the Almighty that the seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, dedicated to a current and topical issues, will be held in the spirit of constructive discussions and will contribute to the development of dialogue between civilizations, and the promotion of such universal human values as friendship and mutual understanding.

Catholic Community in Kazakhstan Becomes More Ethnically Diverse, Says Head of Kazakhstan's Catholic Church

*By Tomasz Bernard Peta
Archbishop and Metropolitan
of the Archdiocese of Saint Mary in Nur-Sultan
Astana Times
Published on 31 August 2022*

When Pope Francis, the Head of the Catholic Church and spiritual leader of 1.3 billion Roman Catholics worldwide, confirmed his official visit to Nur-Sultan and participation in the seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions on Sept. 14-15, the small Catholic community of Kazakhstan rejoiced as Kazakhstan once again demonstrated its role in promoting peace and inter-religious dialogue.

As the Pope's visit draws near, Tomasz Bernard Peta, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Saint Mary in Nur-Sultan, told The Astana Times about the importance of the Pope's visit and the history of how one of the world's dominant religions has co-existed for so long in Kazakhstan along with Muslims and Orthodox Christians.

"The Pope's visit will probably be the brightest and the most important event of the congress," said Archbishop Peta.

"This will be the second visit of the Pope not only to Kazakhstan but to Central Asia in the entire 2,000 years of history of the Catholic church. That is why many Catholics not only from Kazakhstan but also from the neighboring countries want to greet him during the holy mass."

This year thousands of pilgrims from Europe, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Mongolia are to attend the holy mass held by Pope Francis.

Such massive interest in the Pope's visit might appear unusual because Kazakhstan is not known as a Catholic country, however, the event represents Kazakhstan's important role in the development of dialogue and cooperation between religions, connecting East and West.

On Sept. 23, 2001, Otan Ana (Motherland) square in Nur-Sultan hosted probably the greatest number of people in its history: an estimated 40,000 people gathered there to attend the holy mass held by Pope John Paul II, then leader of the Roman Catholic church. Capital residents along with delegations from the neighboring cities, representatives of the Catholic church, Orthodox Christianity and Islam attended the mass.

"Twenty-one years ago, 300,000 people lived in the capital and now the population accounts for around 1.2 million. If only 10 percent of residents wanted to participate directly, imagine how many people that is," said Archbishop Peta emphasizing the extent of the event.

A brief history of Catholics in Kazakhstan

The Catholic doctrine began to spread in Kazakhstan through the effort of missionaries sent from the Vatican. The first evidence of the appearance of Catholic missionaries in present-day Kazakhstan dates back to the 13th century when Franciscan monk John de Plano Carpini was sent as an envoy of Pope Innocent IV to lead a spiritual mission to the Mongol khan – Batu. The journey lasted for more than two years visiting sites like Khorezm, the current Zhetisu Region, Tarbagatai, and Central Mongolia.

Cathedral of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Nur-Sultan. Photo credit: catholic-kazakhstan.org

The growth of Catholicism in Kazakhstan can be understood through the 300-year forced mass resettlement of Catholic believers. Many Catholics arrived in Kazakhstan as exiles, prisoners of war, or refugees starting from the late 17th – 18th century, followed by even larger resettlement during two world wars and the Soviet period.

Estimates vary, but by the early 1920s, there were from 75,000 to 101,140 Catholics in the territory of five deaneries that included the parishes of Western and Eastern Siberia, and Central Asia. They were Catholics of Polish, Baltic, and German descent. Around 320,000 Poles and 110,000 Germans, most of whom were of the Catholic faith, were deported to Kazakhstan during World War II.

The Soviet government did not look favorably at the spread of religions, including Catholicism. As a result, several waves of persecution ensued. In 1937 the last Apostolic Vicar of Siberia, Father Anthony Zhukovsky, was shot. After that, there was not a single living Catholic priest left in Kazakhstan.

With independence, Kazakhstan has promoted tolerance and solidarity for ethnic and religious diversity. In 1999, Pope John Paul II established an independent administrative division in Kazakhstan with a diocese directly subordinate to the Vatican, and three Apostolic Administrations in Nur-Sultan, Almaty, and Atyrau.

“Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan gave the opportunity for people to go to their historic homeland, as a result, several million people, including Catholics migrated to their homelands,” said Archbishop Peta.

Today, Catholics in Kazakhstan make up a minority, 1.3 percent, of the predominantly Muslim and Orthodox Christian society, but despite being a few, they hail from a multitude of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

“In general, the number of Catholics has decreased in the past 20 years since the last visit of the Pope,” said Peta. “But the Catholic church has become more international.”

“Thirty-twenty years ago many had the idea that Catholics in Kazakhstan were mostly Germans, Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians – nationalities that traditionally belong to the Catholic church. Today in Kazakhstan there are dozens of different nationalities in the Catholic church,” he said.

Factsheet on Kazakhstan

Geography

Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia, bordering China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. It is the ninth largest country in the world, equivalent in size to Western Europe.

It is also the world's largest landlocked country, bordering the Aral and Caspian Seas.

At 7,598 km, Kazakhstan's land border with Russia is the second-longest land border in the world (after the US – Canada border), and the longest non-interrupted border in the world.



Demographics

Kazakhstan has a population of 19,644,067 people. Kazakhstan is a young country, with 40% of the population under 25 years of age.

The largest ethnic group is Kazakh, representing approximately 70% of the population. A further 30% are Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Uighurs, Tatars, Germans and others.

The majority (around 70%) of the population are Muslim, and a further 26% are Christian. The remaining 4% are another religion, atheist, or unspecified.

Kazakhstan is ethnically and religiously diverse. There are approximately 140 different ethnic groups and almost 4,000 religious organisations operating freely across the country representing 18 religious denominations.

Economy

Kazakhstan's economy is the largest in Central Asia and larger than all the other states in the region combined. This is largely due to the country's vast natural resources, including an abundance of natural minerals, hydrocarbons and rare earth metals.

It has a skilled workforce, and the economy is diversifying towards agribusiness, manufacturing, logistics and mining.

The government has recently introduced initiatives to further diversify the economy, targeting sectors such as transport, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, petrochemicals and food processing.

The ongoing process of privatising major state enterprises is to continue until the state's share of the economy reaches 18%. Government measures to boost the growth of small and medium sized businesses predict that by 2025, the SME GDP share will increase to 35%.

Between 1991 and 2021, Kazakhstan received \$380 billion worth of foreign direct investment as a result of the economic and social reforms initiated by the Government. In the 2020 Doing Business Report by the World Bank, Kazakhstan ranked 25th globally, rising 3 positions.

Kazakhstan's increased role in global trade and its key involvement in the new Silk Road has given the country the potential to open its markets to billions of people.

Kazakhstan is investing heavily in digital infrastructure and is implementing projects to provide extensive broadband internet access across the country. Plans are also underway to introduce 5G and high-quality data centres in urban and rural areas over the coming years.

Political system

Kazakhstan is a presidential republic, whereby the President is the head of state and nominates a Prime Minister as the head of government. Executive power is held by the government, while legislative power is exercised by the two chambers of parliament, the 107-seat Mazhilis and the 55-seat Senate.

The President of Kazakhstan is Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who was elected in 2019, and the Prime Minister is Alikhan Smailov.

Foreign policy

Kazakhstan has pursued a balanced multi-vector foreign policy, with close relations with its neighbours and the world's major powers, including Russia, China and the US.

It is a member of the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, and participates in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. Kazakhstan is also a founding member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which promotes regional economic integration.

Kazakhstan was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018, the first Central Asian state to be elected to one of the UN's authoritative governing bodies.

Starting from January 2017, Kazakhstan's capital Nur-Sultan has hosted numerous rounds of the Astana Process on Syria, being chosen by its participants as a neutral venue for peace negotiations aimed at resolving the long-running conflict in Syria. These efforts have received praise from the UN and the members of the international community for contributing to the decrease in violence in Syria.

Guide to Nur-Sultan, the capital of Kazakhstan

Nur-Sultan can be considered as the city of contrasts. The weather in Asia's northernmost capital city can range between +40°C in the summer and -40°C in the winter. The old centre, north of the Yessil River (the right bank) is mainly residential with a number of commercial and service centres. South of the river (the left bank), on the other hand, is the newly developed part of Nur-Sultan, which continues to expand rapidly. It hosts governmental and business buildings, as well as cultural, sports, leisure and shopping centres and hotels.



Known for its hospitality, Nur-Sultan welcomed millions of visitors in 2017, after the city hosted the International Exposition EXPO 2017, on the theme of 'Future Energy'. It was the first world's fair to be held in Central Asia, and heads of state from 17 different nations participated in the opening ceremony of the event that brought together 120 countries and 20 international organisations. Nur-Sultan also hosts the annual Astana Economic Forum, a flagship business event in Eurasia.

Key facts

- Established: 1830
- Territory: 710.2 km²
- Population: Approximately 1.2 million (2021)

Brief history of Nur-Sultan

Founded in 1830 as a settlement it served as a defensive fortification for the Siberian Cossacks. In 1832, the settlement was granted a town status and renamed Akmolinsk. In 1961, the city was renamed Tselinograd, and in 1992, it was renamed Akmola.

The official transfer of the capital from Almaty to Akmola was conducted in December 1997. By the Presidential Decree in 1998, Akmola was renamed Astana (meaning capital in Kazakh). In 1999, Astana achieved its first recognition, when the city was awarded the medal and title of the City of Peace by UNESCO.

In 2019, the city was renamed Nur-Sultan, in recognition of the contributions to its development by Kazakhstan's First President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Climate

Nur-Sultan is considered the second-coldest capital city in the world, after Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia. Typically, the city's river is frozen over between the second week of November and the beginning of April. Temperatures during late spring, summer and early autumn are typically very pleasant.

To protect the city from strong winds, in 1997 the government embarked on a project to plant a million-tree ring. Approximately 5,000 new trees continue to be planted every year.

Architecture

The architectural concept of the city is based on harmoniously combining the cultural traditions of the East and the West. The well-known Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa is responsible for the design of Nur-Sultan.

British architect Norman Foster designed some of the city's iconic buildings, including the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation and the Khan Shatyr Shopping and Entertainment Centre.

The Abu Dhabi Plaza is currently under construction in Nur-Sultan, and will be the tallest building in Central Asia once it is completed.

Culture

Despite being a young capital, Nur-Sultan has developed a vibrant cultural scene. There are many theatres, museums, concert halls, libraries and art galleries. Some of the key cultural places include:

- Astana Opera
- Astana Ballet
- State Academic Philharmonic
- Zhastar Theatre

Places to see

There are a number of significant historical and cultural landmarks in Nur-Sultan. Hop-on, Hop-off Bus Tours are available, which makes it very convenient to see the main sites. It is also very easy to see the city on foot or on a bike. Public hire bikes are available throughout the city in the summer.

Top attractions and landmarks:

- **Baiterek Tower:** This 97-metre tower is one example of the futuristic architecture in Nur-Sultan.
- **Ak Orda Presidential Palace:** The official workplace and residence of the President of Kazakhstan.
- **Nur Alem EXPO Pavilion.**
- **The Independence Square:** Features the **Palace of Peace and Reconciliation**, the **Kazakh Eli monument**, the **Shabyt Kazakh University of Arts**, the **Hazret Sultan Mosque**, the **Palace of Independence**, and the **National Museum** of Kazakhstan.
- **Khan Shatyr:** A giant transparent shopping centre large enough to hold 10,000 people.
- **“Qazaqstan” Central Concert Hall:** Unique in its architectural and acoustic characteristics (designed by renowned Italian architect Manfredi Nicoletti), with a capacity of up to 3,500 seats.
- **Mangilik Yel Triumphal Arch:** The 20-metre high arch symbolises the 20th anniversary of independence.
- **Library of the First President of Kazakhstan:** The museum includes more than 20,000 publications and 700 exhibits from the personal collection of the First President Nazarbayev.
- **Svyato Uspenskyi Orthodox Cathedral:** The cathedral acts as a centre for the Orthodox Christian community in Kazakhstan.
- **The Museum of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan:** This museum is situated north of the river on the junction of Abai Street and Beibitshilik Street.
- **Duman:** An entertainment complex consisting of an aquarium, 3D theatre, dome area, souvenir shops and cafes.
- **The ALZHIR** museum-memorial of victims of political repressions and totalitarianism, an hour’s drive from the city centre.

Recent political reforms and the creation of a New Kazakhstan

New Kazakhstan

- Kazakhstan has experienced significant challenges in the first half of 2022, predominantly the tragic events in January, when Kazakhstan suffered the worst violence in its thirty years as an independent state following an armed coup attempt by terrorist and criminal groups, and then the indirect consequences of the conflict in Ukraine. Yet rather than look inward, the government of Kazakhstan has used these challenges to **transform the country into a New Kazakhstan through a major positive transformation**.
- New Kazakhstan, which was proposed by President Tokayev following the January events, means a more **resilient, diversified, and equal economy** that ensures opportunities for private initiative for all citizens, a fairer society, and a more vibrant, dynamic and competitive political system.
- To create a New Kazakhstan, President Tokayev proposed far-reaching political reforms, which required amendments to one third of the Constitution. As a reflection of Kazakhstan's democratic credentials, the amendments were put to a vote in a national referendum, which was held on 5 June. **Citizens of Kazakhstan overwhelmingly voted in favour of the amendments and the reforms**.
- Following the referendum, the President said that it will ensure that the unrest in January would not be repeated. In this regard, the country's leadership has begun the process of ending monopolisation, oligopolisation, and making the economic rules of the game fair for everyone. The end goal is to **create a self-sufficient middle class and an efficient economy that ensures a fair distribution of income, the creation of quality jobs, a steady rise in living standards**, and the full self-realisation of all citizens.
- Kazakhstan will continue systematic work to completely **modernise and de-bureaucratise the state apparatus and build an advanced state** that meets the expectations and demands of the whole society.
- The objective is to address vital social and economic problems, such as inequality and poverty, and ensure **long-term wellbeing of the people of Kazakhstan**.
- Kazakhstan's government is determined to achieve its objective to create a New Kazakhstan, which President Tokayev said should become "**a land of justice**".

Referendum on constitutional amendments in Kazakhstan

- The nationwide referendum on 5 June on the adoption of amendments and additions to the Constitution was a **historic moment for Kazakhstan. Over 77 percent of citizens voted in favour of constitutional amendments** that reflect political initiatives of Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The **voter turnout** was almost 70%. Kazakhstan has now entered a new stage of development.
- The referendum was a demonstration of what a **New and Fair Kazakhstan represents** – the country's firm commitment to democratic principles and an increased role for citizens in state decision-making. As noted by international observers who monitored the referendum, **voting and counting procedures were followed**, and the transparency of the process was ensured. OSCE highly commended the results of referendum in Kazakhstan.
- A referendum was necessary because the large-scale changes to the Constitution that were being proposed should be carried out on the basis of **the will of the people**.
- The referendum allowed every citizen to take a direct part in the historic event that will **determine the future of Kazakhstan**.
- This was the **first referendum since 1995**, when the Constitution was initially amended.
- The changes affect **a third of the articles of the Constitution**.
- The proposed amendments were first proposed by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during his **State of the Nation Address on 16 March 2022**.
- The referendum was **monitored by 272 international observers and 215 foreign journalists** to ensure it was run smoothly and to the required democratic standards.

Political reforms

- The amendments to the Constitution and the political reforms mean **a new phase in the development of Kazakhstan's statehood**.
- The reforms constitute a well-thought-out package testifying to President Tokayev's **commitment to human rights and democratic values**.
- The changes will have the following impact:
 - Greater **democratisation** of the political system.

- A **transition from a super-presidential form of government to a presidential republic** with a strong parliament.
- Further **improvement of the system of checks and balances** between the branches of state power, in the direction of limiting presidential powers, reformatting the activity of both houses of parliament and strengthening the role of the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament).
- **Democratisation of the electoral system** - a transition to a mixed proportional-majoritarian model and further liberalisation of the party registration process.
- **Increased role of the maslikhats** (local representative body), and their independence.
- In summary, the reforms are aimed at **further democratisation of the political processes** in Kazakhstan by:
 - limiting the powers of the President
 - strengthening the role of parliament
 - promoting a multiparty political system and increased political competition
 - further enhancing the protection of human rights.
- The draft amendments and additions to the Constitution were **developed by leading legal and constitutional scholars** and received a positive assessment from the Constitutional Council. The draft constitutional amendments are based on the requests from citizens and are implemented in the interests of the entire society.
- The constitutional reform will **expand the participation of citizens in governance** and ensure genuine democratisation of political processes.
- While many of the reforms are politically focused, the President's reform agenda also includes measures aimed at the **de-oligopolisation and de-monopolisation of Kazakhstan's economy**. The Government has also been tasked with increasing the purchasing power of the population and reducing poverty. Furthermore, more investments will be made in rural regions of Kazakhstan, including in health and education spheres.

President Tokayev delivers his Address to the Nation and announces early presidential elections

Nur-Sultan, 1 September 2022 – Today, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, delivered a major Address to the Nation. The speech addressed the programme of reform and political modernisation towards a New Kazakhstan, as well as the socio-economic development of the country.

The President announced a series of fundamental and comprehensive political reforms, continuing the process of decentralising political power.

This included the recommendation that a Presidential term limit of one term of seven years be introduced, and the announcement of **early presidential elections this autumn**.

President Tokayev cited the importance of securing a “new democratic mandate” for the “successful implementation of fundamental and comprehensive reforms, on the way to creating a fair Kazakhstan”.

As part of this process of ensuring public participation, the Head of State also announced that **elections to the Mazhilis** (lower house of Parliament) and **Maslikhats** (local representative body) will be held in the first half of 2023. The President emphasized that “within the framework of political modernisation in our country, the development of parliamentarism occupies a central place”, and that that “all institutional changes envisaged by the constitutional reform must be legislatively completed by the end of the year”.

Referring to the major political reforms announced in March, which dramatically expanded the space for new political parties, the President hoped that these reforms would “intensify political competition, and contribute to the emergence of a new wave of national deputies.”

Addressing another major theme of the New Kazakhstan reforms, President Tokayev also renewed his commitment to strengthening the rule of law in Kazakhstan. He announced that reforms of the judicial system, and particularly of the Supreme Court, would remove “governmental pressure on judges”. Tokayev also spoke the importance of prioritising competence throughout the judicial system, stressing that all judges “must be highly qualified, honest, and free from corruption.”

Focusing on the **socio-economic development in Kazakhstan**, the Head of State stressed that “we will radically change the relationship between citizens, business, and state, adding that “first and foremost, the state provides everyone with equal opportunities and ensures justice.” He noted that the priorities of the new economic course will be stimulating private entrepreneurial initiative, moving away from state capitalism and excessive state intervention in the economy, the development of competition, the provision of equal opportunities for all and fair distribution of the national income.

President Tokayev announced several new initiatives aimed at increasing quality of life for citizens across Kazakhstan. These included increasing the minimum wage for over 1.8 million citizens, ensuring stable and affordable lending to the real sector, allocation of land to entrepreneurs, building medical centres in 650 villages within two years, which would provide access to primary health care for more than a million citizens.

Turning to the priority of education, a key building block for Kazakhstan’s future economic success, President Tokayev announced establishment of the National Fund for Children. From 1 January 2024, 50% of the annual investment income of the National Investment Fund will be allocated to special savings accounts for children until they reach the age of 18. This will then be used to purchase housing and receive education when children turn 18, as well as other initiatives. The President also instructed to direct the money seized from corrupt officials to the construction of schools.

The leader of Kazakhstan also touched upon the **transit potential of the country**, stating that “Kazakhstan is a very important land corridor between Asia and Europe in the current geopolitical situation. We must take full advantage of this opportunity and become a global transportation hub.”

Commenting on the **tragic January events** this year, the President announced an amnesty for protestors facing criminal charges.

Explaining his decision, he said: “Both those who participated in the protests and members of law enforcement agencies are our citizens. Some of those who broke the law have acknowledged their guilt. I think it's best to treat them with forgiveness.” Tokayev noted that the amnesty will not apply to those accused of terrorists, extremists and torture, and that these extremely serious crimes will be considered by the judicial system.

Concluding his Address, President Tokayev emphasized that “the creation of a Fair Kazakhstan is just beginning. This course is unwavering and will continue regardless of any circumstances of an internal and external nature.”

Kazakhstan as an investment destination

Key Facts about Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is the **9th largest country** in the world with population of over 19 million people. As a result, Kazakhstan is a leader in Central Asia by Global Peace Index.

Kazakhstan is the **largest economy** in Central Asia with a GDP of over \$170 billion and highest GDP per capita in the region. The country accounts for 58% of trade turnover in Central Asia.

Robustness of the national economy has been noted by the leading international financial and development institutions, including the IMF, EBRD and the ADB. Kazakhstan's rating by **Moody's** was upgraded to "Baa2" with Stable Outlook. **Fitch and Standard & Poor's** have also confirmed Kazakhstan's pre-pandemic credit ratings and outlooks.

Since Independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has attracted over **\$380 billion** of FDI, which makes it the largest FDI recipient in Central Asian region.

Reasons to Invest in Kazakhstan

Abundant Natural Resource Base

Kazakhstan is the **6th largest country** in the world by agricultural land area, where over 80% of land (*220 million hectares*) is used for agricultural production. The country is unusually gifted with **natural resources**. Almost all of the elements on the periodic table (*99 out of 105*) can be found in Kazakhstan's soil. As such, 90% of the rare earth metals found in a modern smart phone can be mined in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan is the **largest uranium producer and exporter** in the world and takes the **second place** after Australia on the **developed uranium reserves**. It is also the second largest **chromium producer** accounting for 16% of global production volume.

In addition, the World Bank estimates that there are **over 5000 unexplored deposits** still present in Kazakhstan, valued at **over \$46 trillion**. Moreover, Kazakhstan has huge renewable energy potential. **Wind corridors** in Western regions provide an estimated potential of **1.820 billion kWh per year**, while Southern regions have up to 3000 sunny hours per year.

Business-friendly Environment

The Government constantly works on improving our domestic investment climate in line with the best international standards. This is confirmed by various international rankings. Firstly, Kazakhstan has created an **appropriate legislative base**. Kazakhstan has signed **51 bilateral and multilateral investment treaties**, which guarantee the rights of investors.

Secondly, Kazakhstan developed **multiple platforms** to communicate and effectively solve arising issues. For instance, **the Foreign Investors' Council** chaired by the President focuses on strategic issues of investors. **The Council on Improvement Investment Climate and Investment Council** under the Prime Minister solve systematic and current issues of investors.

Additionally, **the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC)** plays an important role in positioning Kazakhstan as the regional business hub. **The AIFC Court and International Arbitration Centre** provide the Common Law court system for civil and commercial dispute resolution.

Comprehensive State Support

The Government of Kazakhstan provides comprehensive support for investment projects that includes **fiscal incentives** (*such as various subsidies, exemption from Corporate Income Tax, VAT, Land Tax, and Property Tax*) and **non-fiscal incentives** (*such as free plot of land and infrastructure*).

Also, in accordance with the global best practices in attracting investment, we have **13 Special Economic Zones** located all over Kazakhstan that provide established infrastructure and a wide range of investment preferences. We also have **36 industrial zones** with turnkey infrastructure.

Last year, Kazakhstan introduced a new tool – **an investment agreement** that can be directly concluded with the Government. It provides a wide range of incentives and stability of legislation for 25 years.

Investment Opportunities



KAZAKH INVEST

NATIONAL COMPANY

WHY KAZAKHSTAN

Investment Opportunities
at the Heart of Eurasia

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT KAZAKHSTAN



Territory
2.7 million km²
9th largest



Diverse Population
19.1 million people



Highest GDP
\$171.2 billion
Largest economy
in Central Asia



**Region's highest
GDP per capita**
Upper-middle
economy



Trade Turnover
\$86.5 billion



**International
Reserves**
\$90 billion



**Multivector
Diplomacy**
Member of the OSCE,
WTO, UN, OIC, EAEU,
OTS, SCO, CSTO



**Comfortable
Tax Burden Levels**
Double tax treaties
with 48 countries



**Investors' Rights
Protection**
50 bilateral and
1 multilateral
investment treaties



**Nationwide Internet
Coverage**
97.2% of population
have broadband
internet access

SOURCES: WORLD BANK, BUREAU OF NATIONAL STATISTICS, NATIONAL BANK OF KAZAKHSTAN

2

1 GATEWAY TO THE WORLD'S LARGEST MARKETS

KAZAKHSTAN IS A NEW STRATEGIC
Location at the Crossroads of
Europe and Asia.

Kazakhstan is a member of the EAEU:
Preferential access to the market with
180 million consumers



**Access to the market with
over 500 million consumers:**
- Central Asian market
- Western China
- Caspian Sea countries



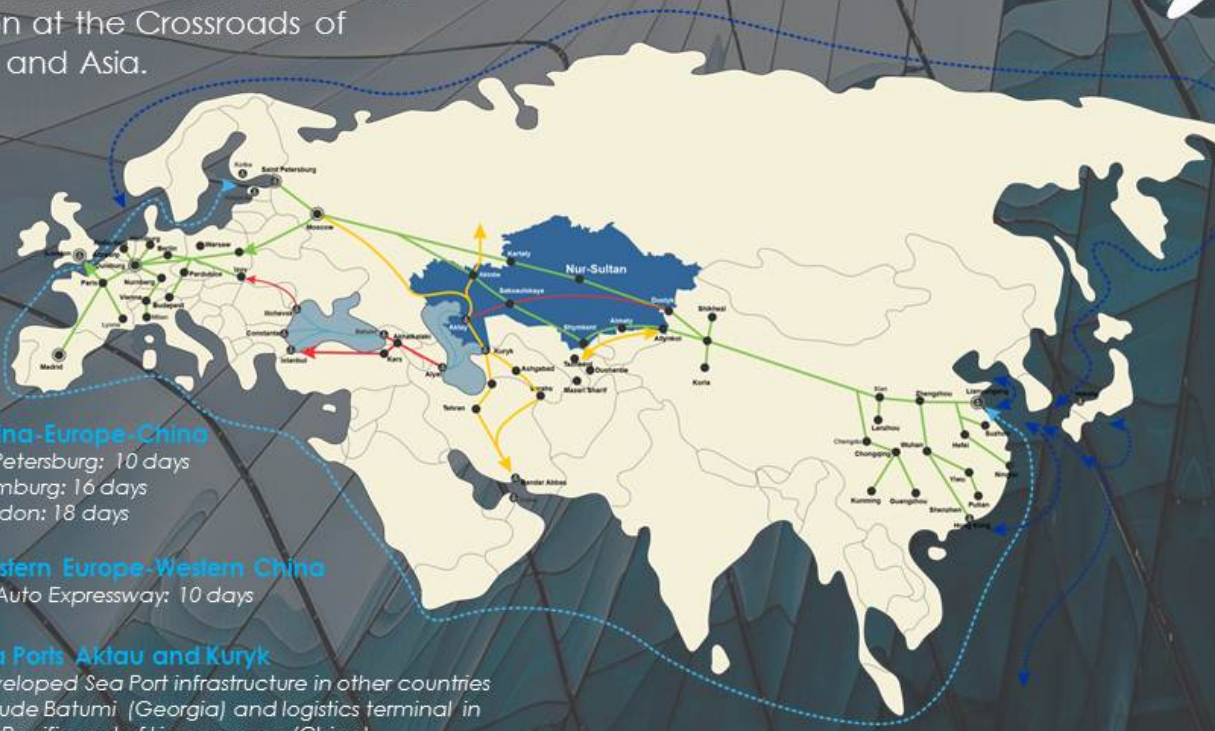
China-Europe-China
St. Petersburg: 10 days
Hamburg: 16 days
London: 18 days



Western Europe-Western China
by Auto Expressway: 10 days



Sea Ports Aktau and Kuryk
Developed Sea Port infrastructure in other countries
include Batumi (Georgia) and logistics terminal in
the Pacific port of Lianyungang (China)



11

transit corridors

96000

km of auto roads

17000

railways

2

sea ports

2 ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCE BASE

LAND

220 MILLION HECTARES OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

#6 IN THE WORLD FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND AREA (FAO)

NATURAL RESERVES

5,000 UNEXPLORED DEPOSITS VALUED AT OVER **\$46 TRILLION** (WORLD BANK)

BEST CONDITIONS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS (WIND AND SOLAR)

WIND CORRIDORS (5 M/S) IN THE WESTERN REGIONS – THE POTENTIAL IS 1.820 BILLION KWH PER YEAR

2500 - 3000 **SUNNY HOURS** PER YEAR IN THE SOUTHERN REGIONS

SOURCES: U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, BP, OPEC, WORLD SILVER SURVEY, WORLD NUCLEAR ASSOCIATION, OECD NEA & IAEA, URANIUM 2020, U.S. ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION, INDEPENDENT STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS

KAZAKHSTAN'S GLOBAL RANKS

MINERAL RESOURCES	RESERVES	PRODUCTION
Chromium	1	2
Uranium	2	1
Silver	5	12
Zinc	6	8
Lead	8	12
Coal	10	8
Iron ore	11	15
Molybdenum	11	12
Copper	10	10
Oil	12	13
Bauxite	12	9
Gold	14	9

3 BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

KAZAKHSTAN ON THE GLOBAL ARENA



#34 in Index of Economic Freedom
(Mostly Free)



#35 in Global Competitiveness
Index



#29 in Global E-Government
Development Index globally
#1 among CIS countries

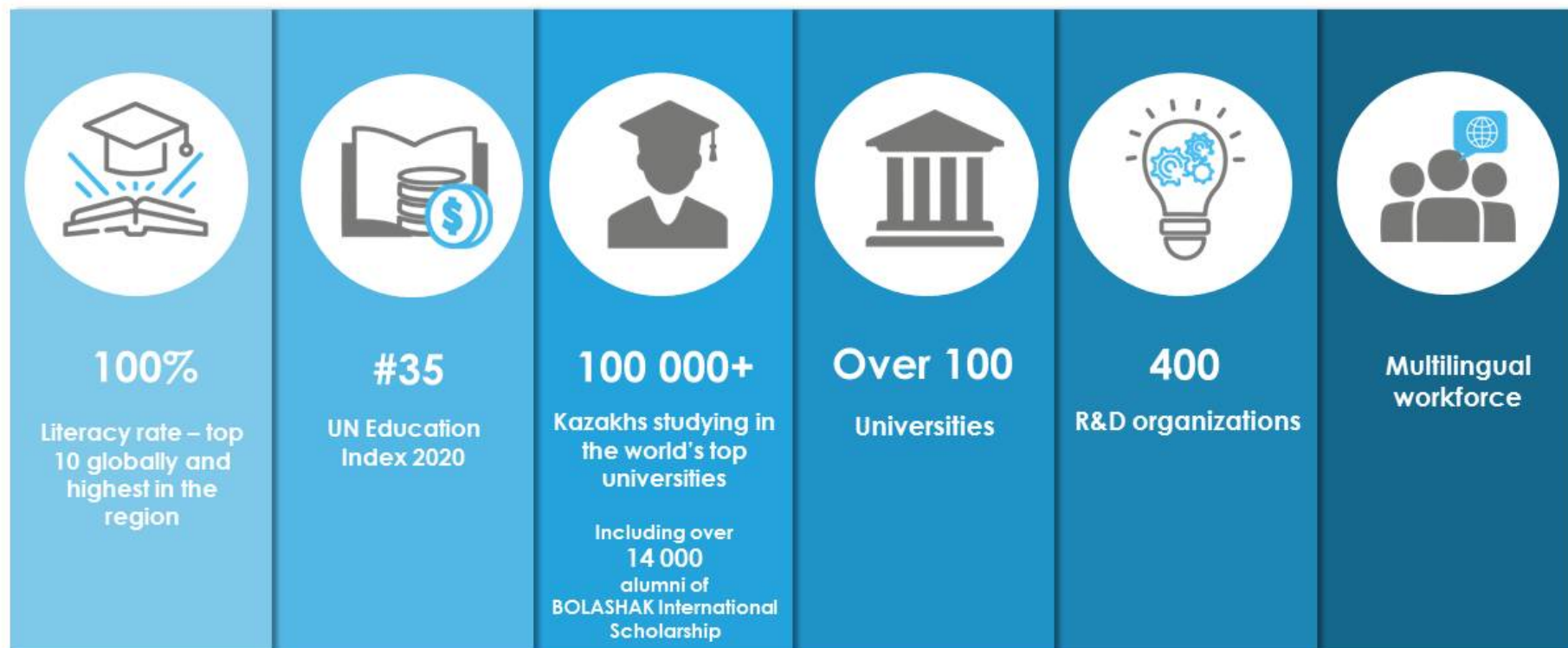


#1 in FDI growth among transition
economies (UNCTAD, 2021)

PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN INVESTOR AND STATE AUTHORITIES

Foreign Investors' Council chaired by the President	on strategic issues
Council on Improvement Investment Climate chaired by the Prime Minister	on systematic issues
Investment Council chaired by the Prime Minister	on current problems of investors

4 QUALIFIED AND EDUCATED WORKFORCE



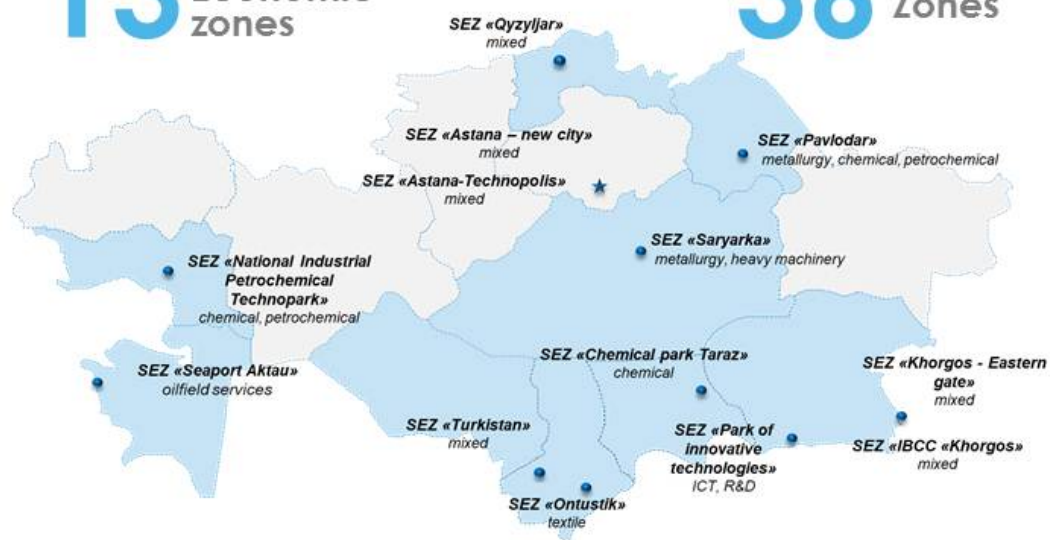
Kazakhstan has the highest literacy rate in the region, most citizens are bilingual with good knowledge of English

5 COMPREHENSIVE STATE SUPPORT



13 Special Economic zones

36 Industrial Zones



NEW TOOL: CUSTOM-MADE AGREEMENT DIRECTLY WITH THE GOVERNMENT ENSURING STABILITY OF LEGISLATION FOR 25 YEARS FOR THE MAJOR STRATEGIC PROJECTS

6 VAST OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS VARIOUS INDUSTRIES



Agribusiness
69 projects



Mining and Metallurgy
44 projects



Chemical and
Petrochemical Industry
10 projects



Healthcare and
Pharmaceuticals
16 projects



Construction Materials
8 projects



Tourism
8 projects



Machinery
Manufacturing
10 projects



Others
32 projects

197 investment proposals by KAZAKH INVEST

Contact information

№	Liaison officers	Position	Telephone numbers
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Weather forecast

Nur-Sultan

September 12	September 13	September 14	September 15	September 16
+ 18 C	+18 C	+ 18 C	+ 18 C	+ 18 C

Currency exchange rate (as of UPDATE 2022)

<i>USD</i>	<i>Euro</i>
475.12	475.53



COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION
OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN