

**KAZAKHSTAN – ON THE WAY TOWARDS INTEGRATION INTO
THE WORLD EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.
TRANSFORMATION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.**

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Universities will increasingly become communities committed to the tireless pursuit of truth, "laboratories of culture" where teachers and students join in exploring issues of particular importance for society¹.

There are two critical growing trends that could be outlined in the field of higher education in Kazakhstan. These trends are attractiveness and growing number of students. 775.7 thousands of students are being taught (educated) in 181 universities (82,8 thousands of population for one university), which accounts for 5.17 per cent of total population. For example, one university in the United States accounts for 75 thousand people which equals to (which makes) 5.4 % of the population. The largest number of universities (66) is located in the city of Almaty, in South Kazakhstan - 19, in the Karaganda region - 15 in Astana city - 11 in the East Kazakhstan Region – 10.

Almaty encompasses 205,6 thousand of students (26.5 per cent of the total). 100,9 thousand - in the South Kazakhstan, 71.8 thousand - in Karaganda, 52,7 thousand - in the South Kazakhstan Region, 44.6 thousand - in Qostanay, 41,8 thousand - in the city of Astana, 37,7 thousand - in Aktyubinsk, 37, 3 thousand - in Zhambyl, 31.1 thousand - in West Kazakhstan Region, 27,5 thousand - in Akmola, 23,2 thousand - in Atyrau, 19 thousand - in Kyzylorda, 17,7 thousand - in Mangistau, 16.9 thousand - in the North Kazakhstan Region, 13.2 thousand - in the Almaty region².

Considering the University as a center of culture and learning opened to all, we are not constrained to specifying its main purpose - to provide conditions for lifelong learning. The need for recognition of the special mission of the university and fulfillment of its duties for building a conceptual image of the future society has to be highlighted (underlined).

¹ *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the participants in the first European meeting of University lecturers, Rome, 23 June 2007.*

² Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on statistic - <http://www.stat.kz>.

«University should, primarily, contribute to progress of humanity. In the life of nations, there are many challenges - spiritual, cultural, social, etc., and the university is closely related to them»³.

Human civilization, while entering the phase of postindustrial, informational development, has faced globalization process, which affected almost all areas of modern society, and of course, that involved education. Time has come to understand what we should preserve from the accumulated wealth, and we should alter in education, so that we would not be left on the edges of civilization.

This circumstance requires adequate in terms of time and content specific changes in education to preserve the best practices of "Soviet" and "Kazakh" schools, especially in the areas of fundamentality and universality education received.

The relevance of this issue becomes evident in connection with the forthcoming entering of Kazakhstan to the WTO, which stipulates the need to bring into conformity with international standards all kinds of categories, grades, degrees, title of training, of working skills, from mere workers to highly qualified experts.

The process of integration of Kazakhstan into a European educational system is on the one hand, gives a sense of euphoria about the inclusion of Kazakhstan to the European civilization, and on the other hand there are many questions to be answered before we dive into the vortex of turbulent globalization process. In his speech at the Eurasian National University named after LN Gumilyov N.A. Nazarbayev noted that «globalization brought in the modern world the vulnerability and fragility, growing instability of socio-economic development. Instead of general «place of prosperity» in a number of regions there is a «place of poverty» and social degradation, which becomes a nourishing environment for these types of international security as international terrorism and organized crime, illegal drug trafficking»⁴. Thus, the most important global trend today is facilitation of international competition. Countries with highly developed economies, crowding out the less developed competitors. We must acknowledge that, along with some negative aspects of globalization carries with it bears a lot of opportunities. But to use them well, we need to improve the competitiveness of the country. Globalization portrays high requirements for competitiveness between national economies. N.A. Nazarbayev pointed out some factors and criteria of competitiveness among which he put special emphasis on level of education in the country. The point is that the nations compete not only in goods and services – they compete in system of social values and educational systems.

The aim of the Bologna Declaration is to establish European area of Higher Education, as well as the activation of the European system of higher education worldwide. This declaration states that: «We must draw special attention to growth of competitiveness of European higher education system in the world. The viability and efficiency of any civilization is measured by attractiveness, which corresponds to the importance of our great cultural and scientific traditions».

³ S. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. *La Universidad al servicio de la sociedad*. Gaceta Universitaria (Madrid), 05.10.1967.

⁴ N.A. Nazarbayev речи, official site of President of Republic of Kazakhstan– www.akorda.kz

«Education Policy of Kazakhstan aimed at joining the European educational space, will imply an increase in competitiveness in the field of education»⁵ - believed President of the Association of Universities of Republic of Kazakhstan Rahman Alshanov. He noted that developments in the socio-economic changes put new challenges in the system of higher education. It should be done «not by destroying the current system or replacing it with another one, but by the adaptation of existing and new forms and methods to modern conditions of Kazakhstan».

The signing of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region by Kazakhstan (Lisbon, 1997.), ratification of Decree of the President by Parliament of the Republic, makes our country a member number of international projects, programs and agreements, such as: "The European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to access to universities (1953)," The European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications (1959), "The European Convention on the General Equivalence of Periods of University Education (1990g.), etc. The European countries have begun to take action towards the implementation of the Lisbon Convention, for this reason they adopted Bologna Declaration in 1999 which is being amended each year, because for the EU unification of concepts and parameters of the entire field of education still remains a significant issue. Policy document "The reform and development of higher education" (UNESCO, Paris, 1995) explicitly emphasizes that: "more and more people and institutions come to understanding that adoption of foreign concepts and values in all regions, and ignorance of regional and national cultures and philosophies entail certain repercussions for education. This finding should be taken into account by those States which are engaged in the reformation of higher education."

The geopolitical position of Kazakhstan, located at a crossroads of three world cultures - Russian, Chinese, culture of the Muslim world, which calls to follow special path of evolution, including a reasonable transformation of the language of culture on the basis of utilization of 3 major languages in the education system from early childhood.

Already, many countries, some sooner, others later underwent this path, without losing any of its sovereignty, its independence. It is supposed that the entire system of education in the country should, as soon as possible, reach the obligatory three-language learning, and that is the essence of the concept of "school of Kazakhstan" and that, under any circumstances, would strengthen the image of the State in the international community. Otherwise, the entry in the international educational space will not have an effect.

The past years were marked by taking significant steps towards modernizing the country's educational system. Broad discussion of the concept which led to ratification of the State Program of Development of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. To implement this important document for the future of the country we need to set up a useful theoretical framework of modernization and development of the education system as a "doctrine of education modernization of Kazakhstan." The doctrine should

⁵ Republican daily newspaper "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda" – www.kazpravda.kz

contain strategic objectives, the ideology of the whole educational system, carrying out the social order of society and of the state, taking into account the geopolitical and economic status of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the international community and the process of globalization in all spheres of life.

A detailed analysis of the status and trends of development, modernization of the education system abroad, the mechanisms of change of its paradigm over Bologna in Europe, the role and place of the fundamental international legislative acts ratified by Kazakhstan, their meaning in modernization of our education system would greatly enrich the content of this document. In the Doctrine there is need to reflect the plan of joining of Kazakhstan to the WTO, the all problems of professional education, which must be adapted to new conditions and realities. It means transparency, awareness, equivalence, and ultimately – recognition our general and professional education. Generally speaking, we should give other countries an opportunity to "measure" our education.

This tool to "measure" education is presented by the principle and system of credit hours, the introduction of which is mandatory for the Lisbon Convention and the Bologna Declaration. Many universities in Kazakhstan have introduced a credit system; some of them already have some experience. The technology to adapt our educational system to the Lisbon Convention, which does not require radical changes, has been designed and implemented. Along with issues of international recognition of the educational system of our country, without the introduction of credit system of education we can not completely ensure the mobility and - equivalence of manpower, as a condition for attending the WTO.

During the implementation stage more focus should put on improving the part-time, evening and the second higher education, e-learning (instead of distance) in modernization environment. Around the world, great, importance to the issue of adult education is widely declared the principle of "life-long education" and all this would require additions to the text of the document.

The current Law on Education has serious discrepancies and inconsistencies with other laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including and the Constitution, international conventions ratified by Parliament. Therefore, the most important issue is the creation of the new law, or even better "Education Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan", with the main provisions of global trends in education that will enable the functioning of education within the legislature field.

Following the ratification of the Lisbon Convention, the Parliament of Kazakhstan in December 1997 in accordance with the Constitution (Article 4, paragraph 3), we are obliged to comply with its basic conditions, and admission to higher education (12th grade) is one of its main provisions.

State program notified the introduction of 12 classroom education in 2010. Consequently, the first pupils will graduate in 2022. So, another 16 years, graduates of schools of Kazakhstan will not be able to apply to foreign universities on equal conditions with their peers from Europe. By doing so, this leads to violation of the

constitutional rights of our children, and the conditions of Dakar Declaration of the UN in 2000 are not met.

During the transition period until 2022, it is desirable to use the guidelines of UNESCO, which allowed former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to reimburse (temporarily until the introduction of 12 year studying), the missing year in the school or university at the expense of extending the school year to 40-42 weeks.

Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall have the right to apply or move to universities in other countries. There is a need to provide them with academic mobility. This is a mandatory condition for Lisbon Convention and the Bologna Agreement in Europe.

All concerned about the 12-year education: timing mechanism, the content and structure of future schools. The main prerequisite for the introduction of 12-th class is not spreading of education throughout the world, as often mentioned, as a mandatory condition for admission to higher education.

In 2001, South-Kazakhstan panel of lawyers on a 12 year studying proposed project, which formed the basis of the plan MES, but subsequently has lost some valuable suggestions and additions.

For example, a detailed analysis of the program from 5th to 11th classes in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and astronomy has shown that you can easily shrink 11 years to 10 years to graduate from school with the shift of sections of the natural sciences to level of educational profile.

All 11 year summer schools would have to transform itself into 10 year primary/secondary school. This was followed by a selection of 1-year, 1.5-year and 2-year program. Moreover, 2-year program of specialized or high school should be obligatory primary education, even for those who are planning of applying to university. The process of studying in the specialized high school must be tied to the technology applied by University based on the credit system of studying. This is stipulated by the fact that the high school serves as a preparatory training before applying to university and the knowledge acquired in the school profile should also be "measured."

This stage of education should be concentrated in regional centers, major population centers. In urban areas, these processes should be organized without high financial expenditures. Universities, large companies, small and medium businesses, providing technology training centers should play active role, Of course, this part of education will require additional funding, but can refer to the practice of the West and particularly the United States. It is widespread "parental contract schools. Individual or several people with their funds and loans organize schools to which children are transferred by the number of budgetary funds.

During the implementation of state program the concept of qualifications and academic degree should be clearly separated. Bachelors, Masters Degree are academic, rather than qualifications. The main function of university education is give knowledge appropriate for academic degree. Qualification abroad, usually assigned by professional

associations or universities receive a license from them and the right to assign qualifications to graduate.

During the implementation of State program it is worthwhile to mention need to bring to conformity with law the content and settings of education. For example, the qualification requirements to obtain a university status. University — which has the right to raise professionals with the academic degree of Master (master), if the degree of bachelor or associate degree — college.

The former secondary education has received a new name - post-professional education. But it is not clear whether it applies to higher education or not. According to UNESCO documents, including of the Lisbon Convention, all formal education beyond secondary school is called high; therefore, this level of education should be referred to as a higher education.

In the West, the equivalent of post-secondary education, which is not part of formal education, refers to technology education, which corresponds to our primary professional. Hence, de-jute, we are downgrading the status of former secondary vocational education, though we actually are upgrading it.

For graduates of state colleges, they will be eligible to apply to the 3rd course of the university in his / her specialty. In these circumstances, the introduction of credit system of education in the 2-year colleges in the upcoming period of time becomes vital, since, when continuing education there would need to "measure" obtained knowledge in the credit-hours.

Translation post-professional education at higher level would require a revision of certain laws as to change the principle of funding, the status of teachers and others, but sooner or later this question will have to be responded. In case of international accreditation of the entire education system of Kazakhstan, we will have some problems while carrying out these steps. For example, in North and South America, and many Asian countries (South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan), this education provide an academic associate degree. (AA, AS). The Bologna Process has not yet got a clear understanding on this subject. More preferable is a North American version, which maintains a formal education in the form of 2-year colleges awarding the academic associate degrees.

Graduates of 2-year colleges by getting additional 60-63 credit can receive bachelor degree after 2 additional years.

An important issue requiring urgent attention is the Master's degree, which is attributed to post-graduation degree, it would be better to consider this step as finished or completed higher education. Because of this situation is the specialty, which needed 5 years of studying, ultimately became 4 years of studying.

In general, it is necessary to determine what specialties are needed for society from 4 and 5 years of education. Where and how will engineer be working with a 4-year of education and bachelor degree? Would not it better to sustain the traditional 5-year

education for assigning master degree, because the volume of knowledge, when translated into credit hours, and subject to reimbursement of 12th class, graduates with 5 years of studying will have the right to do so. In addition, further development requires a conceptual feature of the pedagogical issues, medical, legal, economic and other types of higher education.

And for professional doctoral degrees, there are features in the above mentioned areas of studying. The country can and must preserve a two-tier system of post-graduate level, PhD candidates - the equivalent of the traditional PhD and PhD-researcher or a full habilitate doctor.

Today Kazakhstan is the leader on dynamics of economic and political transformation in Central Asia, which increases its role as a stabilizing "center" of region. Emerging trends and special geopolitical, "median" of the country imposes new duties, and represent a historically unique chance for the people and for the state to express its high mission in the modern civilization.

Consideration should be given and the formation of a single Eurasian educational field with its principles and conditions as part of the world educational space, the more that still have a strong tradition of the former Soviet system of education, of which no one can diminish. And the whole point of reform should be reduced to realize the idea that, ultimately, whatever sphere of life we have chosen - the social, economic, military or political - equivalent to the requirements of the time education is the foundation of national security. In a sense, the essence of ongoing modernization can be expressed by the quote N.A. Nazarbayev:

"The people who will be able completely and quickly master of human life knowledge, was – will get the strength and aim to achieve that for the common good is the goal of any public policy".

States must now more than ever to understand the role that universities will have to play in society, changing and expands internationally, have expressed the belief that:

1) the future of humanity at the dawn of the third millennium, in a wide range dependent on cultural, scientific and technological development, which occurs in the centers of culture, knowledge, research, there are these universities;

2) the task of disseminating knowledge among the new generation, which must assume the universities today is that they must apply to the whole society, whose cultural, social and economic future now requires a special, significant and sustained contribution to education;

3) Universities should ensure that future generations' education and training that would help to care for the great harmony of the environment and life itself. The future of our state, the approval status of Kazakhstan in the international community as a competitive state that depends on its cultural, scientific and technological development, the foundations of which are concentrated in the higher education institutions, the task of building a high level of education of the younger generation must be addressed not only to universities, but society as a whole, future requires a continued and significant contribution to education. Younger generation universities in RK should ensure that

quality education and training that will enable us to take their rightful place in the world community.

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