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Kazakhs Want to Join Venice Commission as SG of Council of Europe Visits



Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan, and Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, meet in Astana on October 11.

Yerzhan Kazykhanov handed the nation's official application to become a full member of the European Commission for Democracy through Law, better known as the Venice Commission, an advisory body of the [Council of Europe](#), composed of independent experts in the field of constitutional law.

At the meeting between Jagland and Nazarbayev in the Kazakh President's Akorda Residence, the sides discussed prospects of cooperation of Kazakhstan with the Council of Europe and the issues of accession of countries to the Council's conventions. Secretary General of Council of Europe stressed that he personally and many others in Europe welcome the stabilising role Kazakhstan plays in the region.

Moreover, during the visit Secretary General Jagland met the Speaker of the Majilis (Lower House) of the Parliament, Secretary of State, Chairman of the Constitutional Council, Prosecutor General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and heads of other Ministries of the country.

A new spark to a greater cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Council of Europe was given during the two-day visit of Secretary General of the Council Thorbjorn Jagland to Astana which began today with meaningful meetings with President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Chairman of Majilis Oral Muhamedzhanov, Secretary of State

Kanat Saudabayev, and other high-level officials. Foreign Minister

“The meetings provided a good opportunity to give a new impetus to the relations between the Kazakhstan and the Council, intensifying the mutual relationship beyond the already fruitful cooperation and institutional relations with the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) and the Venice Commission towards a more advanced interaction in a number of areas mutually agreed by the two sides,” the joint statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kazykhanov and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland on the occasion of the visit states.

According to the statement, the sides expressed their commitment to intensify cooperation in order to build up the necessary capacities and facilitate the accession of Kazakhstan to the conventions for which it has already expressed interest. This corresponds to the deepening links between the two, including through the participation in a number of Council of Europe legal instruments and partial agreements, related to the promotion of good governance, based on the principles and standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Moreover, the sides also highlighted that parliamentary cooperation is another important area which could be further reinforced.

Against this background, the two sides identified a list of areas for future enhanced cooperation, including The Rule of Law with the emphasis on the fight against corruption and criminal justice system, Human Rights with the focus on children rights, juvenile justice and human rights education, and Democracy with the emphasis on cultural cooperation, inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue. Additionally, the list is non-exhaustive and can be expanded in future by means of an agreement between the both sides.



The Venice Commission for democracy through the means of the law is an independent advisory body which cooperates with the Council of Europe member states, as well as with non-members and interested international organisations and structures.

Furthermore, at the meeting Foreign Minister Kazykhanov handed in an application for full membership of Kazakhstan in the Venice Commission, in which the country has had a status of an observer state since 1998.

The Venice Commission for democracy through the means of the law is an independent advisory body which cooperates with the Council of Europe member states, as well as with non-members and interested international organisations and structures. The Commission mainly focuses on constitutional issues, although it also deals with laws on constitutional courts, national minorities, elections, and other laws relating to the democratic institutions of the state. In particular, the Commission consisting of 57 member states also makes recommendations and provides assistance in matters relating to amendments, interpretations, and the adoption of constitutional and other legislative texts, such as electoral laws, laws on constitutional courts, on political parties, on national minorities, federalism, regionalism and others.

Moreover, the sides also agreed to explore the potential for cooperation based on Kazakhstan participation in the European Cultural Convention in the field of education, culture, youth and sport.

“The co-operation had a successful start and both sides are looking forward to stepping it up. In this respect, the steps undertaken by Kazakhstan in advancing education reforms, in particular through acceding in March 2010 to the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) are particularly welcome and encouraging,” the joint statement reads.

Kazakhstan has been cooperating with the Council of Europe and its institutions since 1997. Signing of a cooperation agreement between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliament of Kazakhstan in 2004 significantly activated the bilateral contacts. As well as accession of Kazakhstan into the European Council’s Cultural Convention in 2010 opened an opportunity for the country to join in a series of other conventions.

“Council of Europe considers Kazakhstan to be a very important partner in its policy towards countries in its neighbourhood. The decisions of the Committee of Ministers in Istanbul in May 2011 are a sign of the readiness of the member states of the Council of Europe to bring the relations with countries in Central Asia to a much higher level. Kazakhstan is in an excellent position to be among the first to benefit from this new opportunity,” the statement reads.

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Tehran, Astana Mull Expanding Economic Ties as Kazakh FM Visits Iran



Kazakh Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad shake hands following their meeting in Tehran on October 9.

Photo by Foreign Ministry

During the last weekend, on October 8-9 Kazakh Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov travelled to Tehran to hold high-level talks with the Iranian leadership to review progress of bilateral cooperation and seek new ways to expand one. Among the economic issues discussed were the terms of Iranian side's much anticipated completion of the Kazakhstan – Turkmenistan – Iran railway link and the possibility of renewal of swap operations with Kazakh grain and oil at the Iranian ports on the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

While in Tehran, Kazykhanov had useful meetings with President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, Chairman of Parliament Ali Larijani, and Foreign Minister Aliakbar Salehi.

Both sides reiterated their interest in expanding and deepening economic cooperation between the neighbours through the Caspian Sea. Last year the bilateral commodity circulation reached US\$ 1.2 billion.

Kazakhstan and Iran are currently implementing a few promising projects such as a railway link through Kazakhstan – Turkmenistan – Iran. Once completed the link would improve access for Kazakh goods to ports on Persian Gulf. The Iranian officials assured the Kazakh delegation that they are ready to complete construction of their section of the railway by March 2012.

Iran also demonstrates interest in purchasing Kazakhstan's grain for its own consumption and upgrading transit opportunities to Iraq and other states that would be willing to purchase the Kazakh product as well. The host side said that they are ready to renew swap operations with Kazakh grain and oil on Iranian ports at the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf.

Kazakhstan's ongoing chairmanship of OIC CFM was another focus during the negotiations in Tehran. The Iranian officials assured their Kazakh counterparts of their full support of the initiatives and proposals by President Nazarbayev in enhancing food security mechanisms for the Ummah and encouraging mutual flow of investments.

Kazakhstan and Iran are currently implementing a few promising projects such as a railway link through Kazakhstan – Turkmenistan – Iran.

Other issues discussed in Tehran included the political situation in Middle East, particularly the issue of Palestine, instability in Yemen and parts of North Africa. The Iranian side lauded the Kazakh OIC chairmanship's activeness in coordinating humanitarian assistance for the famine-hit Somalia, which has so far resulted in pledging US\$ 500 million on behalf of the Islamic nations.

The diplomats noted that Iran is an observer-state of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and President Ahmadinejad attended the alliance's recent summit in Astana on 15 June 2011. His negotiations with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on the forum's sidelines provide a strong impulse to strengthening bilateral cooperation.

Yerzhan Kazykhanov also visited the headquarters of the Economic Cooperation Organization, of which Kazakhstan has been a member since 1993, where he addressed the staff to outline his views of multilateral cooperation in the region.

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Children of Kazakhstan Outline Vision of Nuclear-Weapons-Free World

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations in Kazakhstan, the Nevada-Semey Anti-Nuclear Movement and the Civic Alliance of Kazakhstan announced the winners of the National Student Art and Essay Contest which explored the topic "A World Free from Nuclear Weapons" to mark the 20th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site.

The official award ceremony took place on October 11, ahead of the International Forum for a Nuclear Weapons Free World opening tomorrow. It was attended by Kairat Umarov, Deputy Foreign



From L-R: Chairman of Kazatomprom National Company Vladimir Shkolnik, contest winner Akmaral Manapova, Mayor of Nagasaki Tomihisa Taue, Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov and survivor of atomic bombing of Nagasaki Chiyoko Motomura.

Minister, Vladimir Shkolnik, President of the Kazatomprom National Atomic Company, Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of the Japanese city of Nagasaki, Chiyoko Motomura, Japanese atomic bomb survivor, Stephen Tull, UN Resident Coordinator / UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan, Alina Khamatdinova, Executive Director of the Civic Alliance of Kazakhstan, and Anambek Mukhashev, Vice-President of the Nevada-Semey International Antinuclear Movement.

Students from public, private and specialised art schools competed nationwide. More than 420 young participants submitted essays and art works for the contest. Student essays were judged on their research, knowledge and analysis of the subject, as well as supporting evidence, adherence to the topic, originality, and writing skills. Entries for the art contest were judged on their creativity and originality.

The three winners in both nominations were awarded iPads2 for their essays or drawings depicting their vision of how to build a world free from nuclear weapons.

Akmaral Manapova, a 15-year old from the Ainabulak village in Eastern Kazakhstan, took first place. Akmaral related her personal experience when two years ago her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and later had an operation to remove one breast. That was followed by a long process of chemical therapy. In her essay Akmaral writes, "I believe my wish for a future world free from nuclear weapons is shared by children all over the world." She also urges her peers across the globe, "If nuclear weapons are ever tested in your land, stand against them! Let us say no to tests! Children of the world, let us stand against them as one united nation of the world!"

Dinislam Bekkaliyev, a 17-year old from Almaty, was the second place winner. He expressed his ideas and thoughts in verse. In his poem Dinislam asks, "Is a nuclear arsenal really necessary for a country to mount a political pedestal?!" He ends his poem by saying, "We are against a conniving indifference in the struggle for a world without nuclear weapons!"

Zhainar Nazymkyzy, a 16-year old from the Karauyl village in Eastern Kazakhstan placed third. The student born five years after the Semipalatinsk test site was closed and in the place that used to be the site's epicentre writes about her long-suffering native land. She skilfully reconstructs the first explosion as if she were its witness. "Why didn't the people who invented nuclear weapons ever think of their future consequences? This agonising question keeps haunting me." This is why she calls the day when President Nursultan Nazarbayev closed the test site a truly historical event. "A new path opened in front of Kazakhstan. This was the path of

Akmaral Manapova: If nuclear weapons are ever tested in your land, stand against them! Let us say no to tests! Children of the world, let us stand against them as one united nation of the world!"

long-lasting peace and blossoming creation. This happy moment has been written in golden letters in the history of the entire world.”

In the art contest among first through eighth graders, Sanzhar Begaidarov, an eight-year-old from Taraz, won first place. Zhanat Temirkhanov, 13, from Zhitikara in the Qostanay oblast, won second and Mukhtar Serikov, 14, from Qaraghandy took third place.

Each of the winning essays now appears online on the Ministry’s official website and all student drawings are on display at the Palace of Independence, the venue’s forum.

The competition was made possible by the generous support of the KazAtomProm National Atomic Company and the Civic Alliance of Kazakhstan.

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Biking for Peace around Kazakhstan



Initiated by the Norwegian “Bike for Peace” organization and supported by the government of Kazakhstan, the August cycling tour to commemorate the 20th anniversary of closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site took their participants over more than 2,000 kilometres of the Kazakhstan roads.

Photo from www.astana-oslo.com

The main purpose of Semey - Astana cycling tour was to commemorate 20th anniversary of Semey nuclear test site closure and to celebrate 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s independence. It was Norwegian ‘Bike for Peace’ organization who initiated this tour with the support from the government of Kazakhstan.

I had two main reasons why I wanted to take part in this tour. First was to visit Eastern Kazakhstan, my ancestors homeland (on father’s side), which I have never been to and always wanted to see. Second reason was to see how such cycling tours are organised. I had some ideas of organising 1-2 days cycling tours in Kazakhstan either from Astana or Atyrau before. It was an ideal

timing and event to participate in this regards.

We started on August 6 from Semey’s main square. It was the first time when I met the team which consisted of local and Norwegian guys with whom I had to cycle 24 days together...

There were 10 Norwegians; one of them was completely blind and deaf. I was very impressed by this man and admired his attitude to life thinking over how important it is to have state and society support for people like him to have a good quality of life. That person had a pilot and two translators who helped him to cycle on his tandem bicycle and converse with other people. I truly hope that his participation touched hearts of many more people and will inspire disabled people in Kazakhstan and other countries to follow his example and other communities to help in creating normal living standards for everybody.

I have been asked many times on the highlights of the tour...I would say that one of the highlights for me was when we visited Children house with physical and mental disabilities in Urzhar village (East Kazakhstan), where I could see how important and how much our biking companion enjoyed talking to children with the same or similar disabilities offering his help in getting these children educated in Braille.

I cannot describe fully how beautiful is Kazakh land. Eastern Kazakhstan is so different from other regions. Steppe smells of absinthe sage or field wormwood (Artemisia). There are Tarbagatay Mountains, behind which Chinese territory is spread. The closest we were to China was 60 km, mobile network suddenly changed to CNC China. There were beautiful lakes Alakol, Zhalanashkol, Zaisan and Kapshagay on the way, of course it was just so nice to jump into the water to get refreshed after cycling long hours in the hot weather.

There was not much life in the steppe, but we could see many eagles (the same you see on Kazakh flag) flying high showing who was the true proprietor of the land...After a week, on the way from Taldyqorghana to Almaty, landscape started to change, we had more climbs to make and crazy down hills to watch in order to stay stable on a bike. Those were probably the toughest days when

temperature reached +40 degrees C, water supplies were running short and we did the maximum distances cycling 120-140 km daily without stopping for lunch.

I can't stop admiring local people, old and small, who were coming towards us to greet regardless of how big or small village or city was. They always shared their meal with us, sometimes humble, simply cooked but always delicious! I was always wondering how was the living of the local people in the remote locations far away from the big cities or a capital. I have seen it for myself this time! The smaller the

village was the warmer welcome people showed to us, they were so happy and excited to meet us, eager to show to the foreigners the best sides of Kazakhstani people, their daily life. And always they were organizing entertainment programs for us to relax after the long biking day. There were always some exceptionally talented people who could sing and dance everywhere. As part of the cultural exchange Norwegians had to sing many Norwegian songs also which were greeted warmly by locals.

There is another observation I liked a lot to see in those small villages and cities - I could see positive attitude and happiness in the eyes of those people, I could see that every location had restored or new Culture houses, schools and hospitals, parks and recreational areas, museums and nice alleys. It is one thing when the President and the Government say about those kinds of things on TV and another thing to see all these positive changes for myself. Sometimes it felt like being one of the parliament guys who were visiting their local areas checking on the improvements, but in my case I was just one of the local people who came to their houses as a tourist...I love my people and my nation!

All participants liked to say that each day of the ride was different, full of adventures and surprises. We didn't know when the welcoming part was awaiting us, what we were going to eat and where we were going to sleep. We slept in many strange places, such as military barracks, dormitories, boarding schools, some of us under the tent outside, hotels which could not be called as such, etc. However it never ruined my positive attitude, just on the contrary 'spiced it up'.

Another highlight of the journey for me was meeting fantastic people. I truly believe that I've made some good friends. Last night in Astana just before most of Norwegian friends had to take their early morning flight we had a dinner, which I wouldn't call as a farewell dinner, we were discussing our future plans to cycle together in Norway and anywhere else in the world.

Life is so different cycling either in your country or abroad. It was a new experience for me. I will do it again for certain and would recommend to all of my friends to experience the same....

This essay by Saule Kudaybergenova first appeared at www.astana-oslo.com. Reprinted with permission.

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Also in the News:

- President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has signed a law “On ratification of the second protocol on amendments to the Protocol on the exercise of control over the targeted use of military goods supplied under the agreement on basic principles of military-technical cooperation between the states - participants of the Collective Security Treaty as of May 15, 1992,” the President’s press service reported on October 10. In accordance with the Protocol, the procedure of monitoring the use of military products will be also carried out during the supplying of military products to other troops, military units, law enforcement agencies and special services.
- Nursultan Nazarbayev has decreed an appointment of Dauren Abayev as a Press Secretary of the President of Kazakhstan, presidential press service reported on October 7. In past, Abayev, 32, has worked as head of the press service of Kazakh Foreign Ministry, Deputy Press Secretary of the President, and the State Inspector of the Presidential Administration.
- Kazakh-Moroccan inter-foreign ministry consultations took place in Rabat on October 6 through 8. At the meeting between Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Sarybai and Moroccan Secretary of State to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Latifa Akharbach, the sides discussed a number of issues, including the cooperation in international and regional organisations, easing of the visa regime, opening embassies, strengthening cultural ties, as well as opportunities for supplying Kazakh grain to Morocco, and importing Moroccan tropical agriculture products into Kazakhstan. Sarybai also met with Moroccan Minister of Culture Bensalem Himmich, Director General of Morocco Investment Development Agency Fathallah Sijilmassi, and leadership of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO).
- A memorandum of cooperation in national and regional security was signed at the meeting of delegations of the National Security Committee of Kazakhstan and the Federal Security Service of Russia in Almaty on October 11. During the meeting the parties discussed the implementation of a number of agreements between the two sides, as well as measures to enhance interaction in combating terrorism, extremism and transnational crime, and economic security in terms of the Customs Union.
- On October 11, Kazakhstan’s specialised inter-district criminal court of Almaty city convicted two citizens of Kazakhstan, Shalkar Orazalin and Almas Igelikov, and a citizen of Kyrgyzstan Aldayar Ismankulov with the murder of Kyrgyz journalist Gennady Pavlyuk. According to the data, Ismankulov was sentenced to 17 years in prison, Orazalin received 11-year sentence, and Igelikov was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Gennady Pavlyuk was killed in the city of Almaty in December of 2009.
- Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov held a meeting with Vice Chairman of Citigroup’s Institutional Clients Group Carlos M. Gutierrez on October 11. During the meeting, the sides discussed issues regarding the implementation of the People’s IPO programme, and financial and investment cooperation. Moreover, Carlos M. Gutierrez also expressed the interest in cooperation in the sphere of food industry and pharmaceuticals.
- As of October 6, the harvesting campaign in Kazakhstan is 90 percent complete, 24 million tonnes of grain has been cropped, the [official website](#) of the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan reported on October 8. The crop yield made 1,7 kilograms per hectare. According to the data, the Government takes measures to ensure conservation of grain, increasing elevators capacities through construction of new grain collecting stations.
- The tuberculosis morbidity in Kazakhstan in the first eight months of 2011 decreased 11.2 percent compared to the same period of 2010, the [official website](#) of the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan reported on October 10. According to the data, the mortality from tuberculosis has also reduced by 17.4 percent and from malignant neoplasm by 1 percent. The mortality from circulatory diseases has reduced by 13.3 percent, from injuries, intoxications and accidents by 5.9 percent, and mortality from neoplasm has reduced by 5.3 percent. Moreover, maternal mortality has reduced by 35.3 percent, and infant mortality reduced by 13.2 percent.
- Kazakhstan’s National Medical Research Centre will soon start performing heart transplant surgeries, [Interfax](#) news agency reported on October 7 citing Deputy General Director of the

Centre Alikhan Dosahanov. According to the data, in May of 2011 a surgery on the implantation of an artificial heart ventricle was for the first time carried out in Kazakhstan, and in Central Asia overall. The next step is a heart transplant surgery.

- Within the qualifying round of EURO 2012, Kazakhstan's national football team lost to Belgium 4:1 on October 7 in Brussels. The Kazakhs' next and ultimate in the qualifiers game will be against Austria on October 11 at Astana Arena stadium at 10 PM local time.

Things to watch:

- On October 12-13, Kazakhstan will hold the Forum for Nuclear-Free World in the cities of Astana and Semey. The event will consist of two parts - a conference in Astana on October 12, and a forum in Semey on October 13. Topics of the conference will be devoted to giving further impetus to global efforts to enforce the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), development of the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, working out practical recommendations for effective implementation of the principles of zones free of nuclear weapons, and adoption of the Universal Declaration for Nuclear-Free World.
- President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev is expected to pay an official visit to Kazakhstan on October 19-20.

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