

L. Delovarova , G. Baikushikova *, A. Khamzayeva 

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

*e-mail: baikushikova.gulnara@kaznu.kz

TURKIC INTEGRATION AND SOME ASPECTS OF ASSESSING MIGRATION POTENTIAL ON THE CASE OF KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKEY

Various aspects of Turkic integration are the subject of research within the framework of modern international relations, particularly in the Central Asian region. For the Central Asian region, the factor of Turkic integration is one of the vectors in foreign policy as an opportunity to balance and develop, as well as to promote its national interests. The Organization of Turkic States (OTS) has passed a certain way in several stages and as a result has transformed and received the status of an international organization. At this stage, the OTS is in the process of defining strategic priorities and has the potential for further expansion. The stated goal of the OTS is to strengthen peace and stability, as well as to develop cooperation and capacity building through the preservation of the history and cultural heritage of the Turkic-speaking countries. Moreover, the organization acts as a bridge between member states in deepening international cooperation and maintaining security. One of the important, but still unstudied aspects within the framework of the OTS is the potential of migration processes, which covers almost all countries of the Organization. The Organization of Turkic States considers migration processes primarily in the context of security, certain activities have also affected the strengthening of cooperation between diasporas in the OTS region, but migration processes themselves and their consequences in terms of economic, investment and educational components have not been comprehensively studied and addressed yet. The most striking example in this context is migration from the OTS countries to Turkey, which in recent years has increasingly become a migration hub at the crossroads of several regions. The migration case between Kazakhstan and Turkey, namely migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey, is interesting for assessing the potential of mobility in the context of economic, cultural, educational and other processes.

Keywords: Turkic integration, Organization of Turkic States, investment migration, educational migration, migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey.

А.Ф. Деловарова, Г.С. Байкушикова*, А.В. Хамзаева

Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан

*e-mail: baikushikova.gulnara@kaznu.kz

Түркілік интеграция және Қазақстан мен Түркия мысалында миграциялық әлеуетті бағалаудың кейбір аспектілері

Түрк интеграциясының түрлі аспектілері қазіргі халықаралық қатынастар аясында, әсіресе Орталық Азия өңірінде зерттеу тақырыбы болып табылады. Орталық Азия кеңістігі үшін түркі интеграциясы факторын сыртқы саясатта теңгерім мен дамудың мүмкіндігі ретінде, сондай-ақ ұлттық мүдделерді ілгерілету үшін бір бағыт ретінде қарастыруға болады. Түркі мемлекеттері ұйымы (ТМҰ) белгілі бір кезеңдерден өтіп, халықаралық ұйым мәртебесін алды. Қазіргі таңда ТМҰ стратегиялық басымдықтарды анықтау үдерісін өткеруде және әрі қарай кеңею мүмкіндігіне ие. ТМҰ-ның жарияланған мақсаты – бейбітшілік пен тұрақтылықты нығайту, сондай-ақ түркі тілдес елдердің ортақ тарихы мен мәдени мұрасын сақтай отырып, ынтымақтастықты дамыту және әлеуетті күшейту. Сонымен қатар, ұйым мүше мемлекеттер арасында халықаралық ынтымақтастықты тереңдету және қауіпсіздікті қамтамасыз ету үшін көпір рөлін атқарады. ТМҰ аясында әлі толық зерттелмеген маңызды аспектілердің бірі – миграциялық процестердің әлеуеті, ол ұйым кеңістігінің барлық елдерін қамтиды. Түркі мемлекеттері ұйымы миграциялық процестерді, ең алдымен, қауіпсіздік тұрғысынан қарастырады, белгілі бір қызмет түрлері диаспоралармен ынтымақтастықты күшейтуге бағытталған, бірақ миграциялық процестер мен олардың экономикалық, инвестициялық және білім беру салаларындағы салдары әлі кешенді зерттелмеген және жеткілікті түрде қарастырылмаған. Бұл контексте ең айқын мысал ретінде соңғы жылдары бірнеше өңірдің қиылысында миграциялық хабқа айналып келе жатқан Түркияға қоныс аудару үрдісі көрінеді. Қазақстан мен Түркия арасындағы миграциялық жағдай, атап айтқанда Қазақстаннан Түркияға көші-қоны, экономикалық, мәдени-білім беру және басқа да процестер тұрғысынан мобильділік әлеуетін бағалау үшін қызықты болып табылады.

Түйін сөздер: Түркі интеграциясы, Түркі мемлекеттерінің ұйымы, инвестициялық көші-қоны, білім көші-қоны, Қазақстаннан Түркияға көші-қоны.

А.Ф. Деловарова, Г.С. Байкушикова*, А.В. Хамзаева
Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби, Алматы, Казахстан
*e-mail: baikushikova.gulnara@kaznu.kz

Тюркская интеграция и некоторые аспекты оценки миграционного потенциала на примере Казахстана и Турции

Различные аспекты Тюркской интеграции являются предметом исследования в рамках современных международных отношений, в частности, в Центральноазиатском регионе. Для Центральноазиатского пространства фактор тюркской интеграции является одним из векторов во внешней политике как возможность балансирования и развития, а также продвижения своих национальных интересов. Организация тюркских государств (ОТГ) прошла определенный путь в несколько этапов и как результат трансформировалась и получила статус международной организации. На данном этапе ОТГ проходит процесс определения стратегических приоритетов и имеет потенциал для дальнейшего расширения. Заявленной целью ОТГ является укрепление мира и стабильности, а также развитие сотрудничества и укрепление потенциала через сохранение общей истории и культурного наследия тюркоязычных стран. Более того, организация выступает в качестве моста между государствами-членами в углублении международного сотрудничества и поддержания безопасности. Одним из важным, но не освещенных аспектов в рамках ОТГ видится потенциал миграционных процессов, которые охватывают практически все страны пространства организации. Организация тюркских государств рассматривает миграционные процессы, прежде всего в контексте безопасности, определенная деятельность затрагивала и укрепление сотрудничества диаспор на пространстве организации, но сами миграционные процессы и их последствия с точки зрения экономической, инвестиционной и образовательной составляющей пока не имеют комплексного изучения и освещения. Наиболее ярким примером в данном контексте видится миграция из стран ОТГ в Турцию, которая в последние годы все больше становится миграционным хабом на перекрестке нескольких регионов. Миграционный кейс между Казахстаном и Турцией, а именно миграция из Казахстана в Турцию видится интересным для оценки потенциала мобильности в контексте экономических, культурно-образовательных процессов и других процессов.

Ключевые слова: Тюркская интеграция, Организация тюркских государств, инвестиционная миграция, образовательная миграция, миграция из Казахстана в Турцию.

Introduction

Turkic integration is one of the trends in the development of international relations along the perimeter of the Central Asian region and more broadly, at the interregional level. Kazakhstan, in its stated multi-vector foreign policy, has identified Turkic integration as one of the vectors for development and promotion. This is due to the desire of implementation of the state interests by building constructive and balanced relations with all the actors on the international scene. Today, this approach can be considered as the foundation for the development of a medium-sized state. At the same time, in a complex international context, the Turkic vector will contribute to the further strengthening of Kazakhstan's international status as a mediator country and a country promoting integration processes, given the already existing experience of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

The main objective of this article is to provide an overview analysis of the stages of Turkic integration and identify the potential of migration processes using the example of Kazakhstan and Turkey. The re-

sults of this study do not claim to be fully in-depth, but this is an attempt to analyze the process of Turkic integration not only from the point of view of the maturity of the amalgamated territorial community and its institutions, but also in the context of migration processes from Kazakhstan to Turkey as a case that helps to reveal the economic and cultural-educational potential. This case is especially interesting because Kazakhstan itself is a host country for labor migrants in Central Asia. The flows of migrants to Turkey are mostly related to investment migration and education.

Turkic integration is a multifaceted process that unites East with West, North with South, the core of which is the Eurasian continent. The main initiator of this process is the Republic of Turkey in close cooperation with the Republic of Kazakhstan. Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan also contribute to the process of rapprochement within the framework of the Turkic vector. Five states are members of the Organization of Turkic States, and Turkmenistan is an observer. This rapprochement was facilitated by the international situation and the formation of new cooperation formats.

The Turkish vector was one of the most dynamic, primarily due to Ankara's initiative. Turkey was the first state to de facto recognize the independence of the Central Asian states and actively develop cooperation with all Turkic-speaking states in the region. For Turkey the disintegration of the USSR was an important moment to unite the Turkic-speaking states of Central Asia in order to strengthen its own position in Eurasia and the wider international community. Turkey's activity was aimed at intensive development of cooperation in political, economic, cultural and educational spheres. The progressive development of Turkic integration led to the creation of several institutions that served as a solid basis and subsequently strengthened the Organization of Turkic States, which is ready to function in the face of new challenges and opportunities.

One more factor that should be considered in the framework of strengthening Turkic integration is the potential of migration processes within the OTS. The migration case from Kazakhstan to Turkey seems to be one of the interesting and illustrative cases in the context for assessing the integration potential.

The methodology of this study covers quantitative (in-depth interviews¹) and qualitative research methods, such as analysis of statistical data, review of certain summits and final program documents. The authors also utilized literature review and news websites.

Also, in order to reveal the potential of migration processes between Turkey and Kazakhstan within the framework of the OTS, pull-push factors have been used to help understand the dynamics and peculiarities of migration processes from Kazakhstan to Turkey.

Literature review within the framework of this study includes just limited publications on some aspects of Turkic integration, as most of the materials present the results of statistical data and in-depth interviews. Along with this, selected publications devoted to the formation of the main stages and features of Turkic integration (Parubochaya Y.F., 2016), (Chzhan Yujyan', 2023), (Telebayev, G., 2021), (Darkhan Kidirali, 2022). Some articles cover the role of Turkey in Central Asia (Ermekbaev A., Ekibsova Zh., Nytrat I., 2024) and (Malysheva D., 2024) which are important to understand the perception of CA region in terms of Turkic integration processes.

This study also covered selected papers on key institutions of Turkic integration (Mukhamedzhanova S., Shahin I., Sharip A., 2023), security potential (Appasova, D., 2023) and migration processes from Central Asia to Turkey (Makhanov K., 2021), (Ryazantsev S.V., Vazirov Z.K., Sivoplyasova S.Y., 2021). There is still a lack of comprehensive studies on Turkic integration and this requires serious contribution and scientific results.

Discussion

The development of Turkic integration is seen as a multifaceted process that can be divided into several stages. The idea of integration began to turn into an important political factor in interstate and international relations. This is confirmed by the approaches of domestic and foreign experts (Darkhan Kydyrali, 2022), (Parubochaya Y., 2016).

The *first stage* can be conditionally included 1992-1998, during which there was an intensive strengthening of cultural and humanitarian ties, as well as a convergence of positions on a number of issues.

The *second stage* covers the years 1998-2006, when the ties of Turkic countries in the sphere of political and economic interaction were actively developing. At the same time, there was some stagnation in the development of Turkic integration, caused by both internal factors in Turkey and external ones, including the economic crisis and some lack of involvement of Central Asian countries and focus on other vectors.

The *third stage* is the period of the beginning of the institutionalization process and its strengthening, covering 2006-2021. It was then that the Turkic Council, TurkPA, International Turkic Academy were established. Thus, the second decade of the 20th century marked an important milestone in the development of Turkic integration. In the context of the emergence of institutional structures, 2009-2015 should be highlighted, when after the results of the IX Summit of the Heads of Turkic-speaking States in Nakhchivan in 2009 and the Nakhchivan Declaration (Nakhchivan Declaration, 2009) ratified by the member states, including Kazakhstan (O ratifikacii Nahichevanskogo soglasheniya o sozdanii Soveta sotrudnichestva tyurkoyazychnyh gosudarstv. Zakon Respubliki Kazahstan ot 27 sentyabrya 2010 goda № 341-IV. (2010), adopted at this summit, structural changes began to advance significantly.

Transformation of the Turkic Council in 2021 (Eighth Summit of Turkic Council, 2021) into the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), as well as the

¹ Within the framework of this research 12 in-depth interviews were conducted during 2023 and 2024 (with 5 Kazakhs in Istanbul, 7 with Kazakhs on the Antalya coast).

stable agreement and accession of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to this structure indicates a new level of integration and a new stage, the fourth stage of development of Turkic integration.

In this context, it also seems possible to speak about the sustainability of Turkic integration and the OTS itself in the status of an organization, which has been operating since November 2021 and for this period already has a great experience of cooperation, a certain history of relations and a branched structure. Such communities and structures as the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Aksakals and the Secretariat, as well as the International Organization of Turkic Culture, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States, the International Turkic Academy, the Foundation of Turkic Culture and Heritage, the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Representative Office of the Organization of Turkic States in Hungary – very clearly define the Turkic factor as having a separate vector of functioning.

Since 2023, we can talk about a new stage in the development of Turkic integration, when at the end of the active period of institutionalization, the OTS, representing a full-fledged international structure, begins to define a joint international agenda and is open to the outside world. In this context, it is possible to mention the results of the 10th and 11th summits of the OTS in 2023 and 2024 in Astana and Bishkek.

The 10th Summit marked Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization of Turkic Speaking States, which was held under the slogan "TURK-TIME": Traditions, Unification, Reforms, Knowledge, Trust, Investments, Mediation and Energy (*The 10th Summit of the Organization of Turkic States*, 2023).

These priorities have determined the activities of the organization in strengthening Turkic solidarity, continuing the development of the scientific component, as well as the development of new sources of energy, modernization and diversification of its transportation routes.

The summit resulted in the signing of 12 documents aimed at strengthening and developing interconnections. Among them is the Joint Action Plan for the implementation of the transport connectivity program for 2023-2027. Experts note the great potential in the economic development of Turkic integration, which lies in the transport and transit unification of the vast space between the markets of the EU, Turkey, the South Caucasus, Central Asia and China (*Summit of the Heads of Member States of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS)*, 2023).

Importantly, the need to fight against common security challenges such as arms and drug trafficking, terrorism, extremism and unregulated migration was emphasized.

Also taking into account the agreement "On Financial Centers of the Turkic World", the Turkic Investment Fund – the first joint financial institution of economic integration of the Turkic world – has already been established within the framework of the OTS.

Within the framework of the 11th summit in Kyrgyzstan, the Bishkek Declaration was signed, agreements, decisions and protocols were concluded in various areas. Among the adopted decisions are such important items as declaring Bishkek the digital capital of the Organization of Turkic States in 2025, the decision to adopt the Charter of the Turkic World, the memorandum on the establishment of the Council of Turkic Central Banks, the decision to adopt the "Turkic Green Vision: Unity for a Sustainable Future", the memorandum of understanding on the development of the Large Turkic Language Model of the OTS, the agreement on the establishment of the OTS Civil Protection Mechanism (*V Bishkeke sostoyalsya 11-j Sammit glav gosudarstv Organizacii tyurkskih gosudarstv*, (2024).

The next 12th Summit is planned for 2025 in Azerbaijan and an informal summit in Hungary. At the current stage of the organization's development, it is clear that subsequent events will be dedicated to strengthening the position of the OTS in strategic terms and strengthening external relations with partners and potential participants.

Even a brief review of the selected events speaks about the steady progressive evolution of Turkic integration and the beginning of a new stage of structural activity of the OTS not only in the internal but also in the external contour.

Thus, the organization is actively functioning within the framework of the implementation of the Nakhchivan Agreement, the Turkic World Vision 2040, the OTS Strategy 2022-2026, the Turkestan Declaration 2023 and the Sustainable Development Goals under the UN Agenda 2030.

At the same time, experts also note the difficulties in the process of strengthening Turkic integration, as the OTS members still do not have sufficiently formed common goals and visions on certain issues. Moreover, the organization does not have a common, continuous geographical space, which is one of the objective obstacles to more intensive integration (Chzhan Yujyan', 2023). It should also be noted that Turkic integration lacks a strong center, in particular, an economic one. To date, neither

Turkey nor Kazakhstan is ready to assume this role. One of the difficulties is the different perception of the Turkic factor, mental differences and views of the peoples of the member countries of the organization.

Along with this, it is important to note that the geographical space of the Organization of Turkic States is expanding, covering new states and regions, and a qualitatively new model of regional and interregional interaction has been created. In this context, the OTS has a huge potential and all the necessary conditions for further integration in Eurasia.

Thus, the Turkic integration vector of states is institutionalized and has formed a development strategy, where the priority has shifted from the historical and cultural aspect to the maintenance of security and stability, as well as economic interaction. This is confirmed by the fact that in recent years, cooperation between the OTS countries has become more pragmatic and meaningful (Chzhan Yujyan', 2023). The activation of cultural and humanitarian ties was replaced by the strengthening of trade, economic and investment aspects, the importance of the logistic factor, the priority recognition and development of cross-continental transit corridors was recognized and increased.

Taking into account all these processes of formation of the OTS, its structure, as well as the formation of the normative base, it seems that the organization is being formed into an active factor of international relations. This state of integration indicates that in the new geopolitical and geo-economic realities, the Turkic factor is strengthening and becoming a real unified voice on certain issues on the international agenda.

Results

Migration processes in the context of Turkic integration

In the process of development of Turkic integration, cultural aspects and scientific diplomacy, economic and financial aspects have been repeatedly noted as a logical reinforcement of integration. It is also logically important that the OTS countries form a common agenda to confront security challenges

When forming the institutions of Turkic integration, the commonality of language and identity was initially taken as a basis, taking into account the sovereign equality of all participants in this process. Along with the fact that integration along the Turkic vector is going in many key directions, in particular, economic, however, there is still no unified vision

and serious mechanism for economic convergence, which is present in any sustainable integration association today. The main indicators of economic integration are the formation of a common labor market, free movement of goods, movement of services, capital and free movement of labor. Such an indicator as free movement of labor force, namely labor migration (along with educational migration) is a very serious aspect of integration and such integration models as the European Union, ASEAN, etc. and the relatively recently created Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are examples of this. When comparing the process of Turkic integration and, in particular, the OTS with the Eurasian Economic Union, it is important to realize that the integration process in both cases was initially based on different parameters, but the economic aspect is also important in each case, but in different dimensions and to a different extent.

In the case of the EAEU, free movement of labor is seen as the most successful link, both for the union and for the migrants themselves, who have several advantages and this is enshrined in the *EAEU Treaty* (EAEU Treaty, 2014, Section XXVI, Articles 96-98). In the case of Turkic integration, migration is mostly perceived as a challenge, which was highlighted at the 10th OTS summit in 2023, but at the same time, issues on the interaction of diasporas within the cultural aspects have been raised several times before, in particular the 4th meeting of the OTS was dedicated to this (Chetvertoe zasedanie Organizacii tyurkskih gosudarstv po voprosam diaspor, 2021)). And it was an idea to create centers of Turkic diasporas in foreign countries in the OTS area which could enlarge the members' potential but the idea wasn't realized. Migration issues are not discussed in any context and some relevant trends like economic (investment, labor migration) and educational aspects (educational migration) could seriously contribute to the integrational processes. At the same time, it should be noted that migration, in particular labor and educational migration, takes place regardless of the outlined frameworks and borders of integration associations. Migration aspects are an important factor of integration processes in the transformation of international relations. In this context, it is important to consider migration from the OTS countries to Turkey, which is not only the main integrator and locomotive of migration, but also a major migration hub.

Migration to Turkey from OTS countries: volumes and trends

Turkey, due to its geopolitical position and history, has a multifaceted migration history and a di-

versified migration profile, being a kind of interregional migration hub connecting different vectors.

One of the relatively new and steadily developing corridors is the Turkey-Central Asia corridor; this space includes most of the OTS member states today.

Overall, the complex geopolitical situation in Eurasia and conflict between Russia and the Ukraine is another important factor driving migration to Turkey, the consequences of which have a serious impact on migration in Central Asia (CA) and its external vectors. The weakening of the Russian economy as a result of economic sanctions and the outbreak of the conflict with Ukraine leads to a decrease in the employment and income of CA labor migrants in Russia, as well as their ability to send remittances. Moreover, a certain part of the Russian population, mostly young men, called “relocants”,

also migrate to Turkey on a temporary basis (and on a permanent basis) due to periodically increasing mobilization needs and the difficulties of doing business. The choice of Russians in favor of Turkey that the country has the necessary conditions for a sustainable and safe stay.

Thus, according to the Turkic statistical institute citizens of the Russian Federation took the first place in the foreign immigrant population in 2023 with 13.2%. This group was followed by citizens of Azerbaijan with 8.2%, Turkmenistan with 7.3%, Iran with 6.7% and Afghanistan with 5.9%, respectively. On the other hand, Russian citizens took the first place in the foreign emigrant population with 17%. This group was followed by citizens of Iraq with 15.7%, Afghanistan with 8.3%, Iran with 6.5% and Turkmenistan with 4.9%, respectively (Turkish statistical institute, 2023).

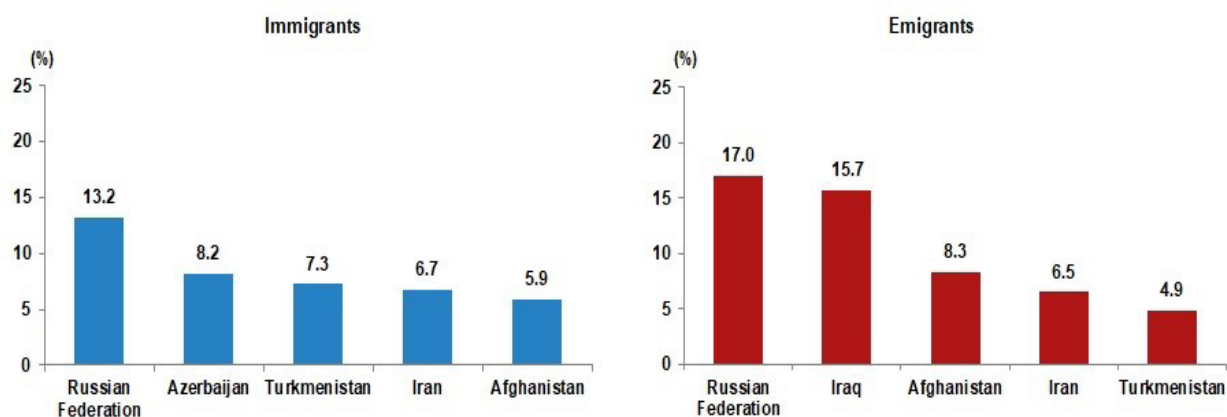


Chart 1 – Top 5 countries by the citizenship of immigrants and emigrants, 2023

Source: Turkish statistical institute, 2023

Such data also support the thesis that Turkey is a major transit corridor. It should be noted that Turkey is the second destination country for the Central Asia region and Azerbaijan, the main OTS countries after Russia, along with South Korea.

It is necessary to note a whole series of pull factors that contribute to the increasing dynamics of migration of these countries to Turkey:

- relative territorial proximity, there is a stable system of air transportation between the countries;
- the established strong cultural, tourist and business ties that have been established, among others, as a result of the development of Turkic integration promote migration;
- an important role is also played by the cultural and religious factor – Islam, although in different

degrees, is preached in all the countries presented in this study, and the language factor, similarity of languages, the Turkic basis of languages contributes to the perception of young people in Turkey as a country convenient for adaptation and work;

- one of the factors is the perception of Turkey as a country of opportunity for fast tourism in terms of developed tourism and flexible business, particularly trade;

- It is necessary to note the dynamic changes in the field of investment, medical, educational tourism, which began to attract entire families from the OTS states to Turkey;

- favorable climate availability of seas, extended recreation infrastructure, and Mediterranean cuisine, considered the healthiest in the world, etc.

Along with pull factors, there is a whole series of push factors, such as constant inflation and periodic price increases, complications in obtaining a residence permit and migration regime, natural disasters such as earthquakes, etc.

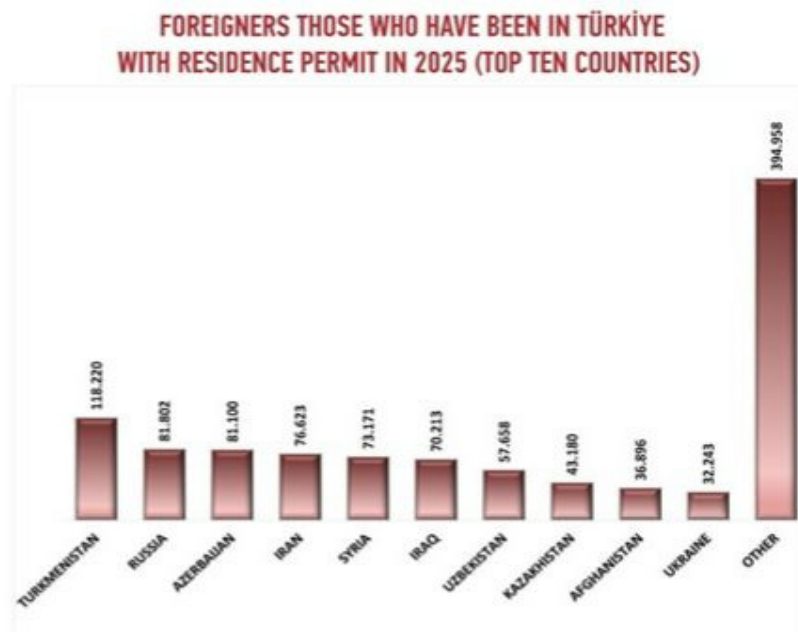
The main migration trends from the CA region to Turkey are labor and educational migration. In recent years, there has also been so-called investment (economic) migration to Turkey, related to obtaining residence permits and citizenship when buying real estate and private property. It should also be noted that along with the popularity of seasonal tourism during vacations there is an increasing number of medical tourism (IVF, oncology treatment, etc.) among the citizens of the countries of the region. It should also be noted family migration, which has been increasing in recent years. Another trend that is observed from the OTS countries to Turkey and has not been sufficiently researched yet is the marriage migration.

These trends affect the level of sustainability of migration attitudes of all categories of migrants from the OTS and increase interest in Turkey as an alternative and main attractive migration hub.

Data provided by the Presidency of Migration Management of Turkey show that Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are among the top 10 countries whose citizens have residence

permits for the last 5-7 (the period is set by the authors, but the trends considered are stable for earlier periods) years and as of the beginning of 2025 Turkmenistan – 118,220, Azerbaijan – 81,100, Uzbekistan – 57,658, Kazakhstan – 43,180 (Presidency of Migration Management of Turkey, 2025). Although Kyrgyz citizens are not among the top 10 countries, expert estimates indicate that Turkey is attractive for labor and education migrants, marriage and other types of migration.

It should be noted that citizens of Turkmenistan, whose migrations to Russia and Kazakhstan are not so great, actively migrated to Turkey until September 2022 due to the absence of visa regime and a series of other factors. Turkey canceled the decision of the Turkish Council of Ministers of July 19, 2007, according to which citizens of Turkmenistan with general civil passports could stay in Turkey for up to 30 days without a visa for tourism purposes. The decision was taken at the request of the government of Turkmenistan in order to “improve and maintain on a systematic basis the rules of stay of Turkmen citizens in the Republic of Turkey” (Turciya otme- nila bezvizoviy v”ezd dlya grazhdan Turkmenistana, 2022). But even after such a decision, Turkmen citizens are determined to actively migrate to Turkey for economic and educational reasons and constitute a large migration flow even after 2022.



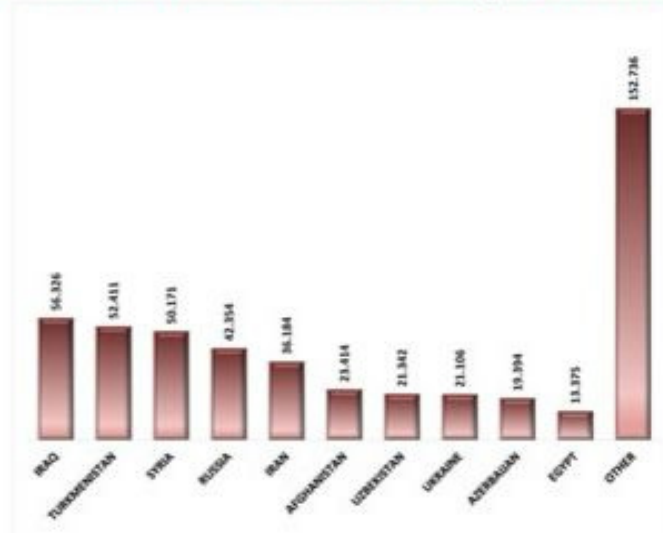
Graph 1 – Foreigners those who have been in Türkiye with residence permit in 2025 (top ten countries)

Source: Presidency of Migration Management <https://en.goc.gov.tr/residence-permits>
(data relevant for 06.02.2025) Accessed: 10.02.2025.

Approximately the same picture (with the exception of Kazakhstan) is observed in the top 10 list of countries whose citizens have a temporary permit.

Data on international students also shows Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan in the top 10 list of student origin countries, including as of early 2025.

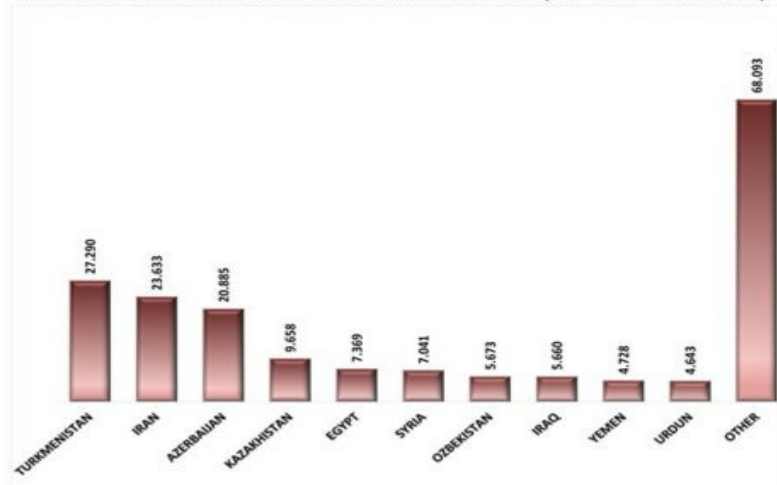
**FOREIGNERS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN IN TÜRKİYE
WITH SHORT TERM RESIDENCE PERMIT IN 2025 (TOP TEN COUNTRIES)**



Graph 2 – Foreigners those who have been in Türkiye with short term residence permit in 2025 (top ten countries)

Source: Presidency of Migration Management <https://en.goc.gov.tr/residence-permits>
(data relevant for 06.02.2025) Accessed: 10.02.2025.

**FOREIGNERS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN IN TÜRKİYE
WITH STUDENT TERM RESIDENCE PERMIT IN 2025 (TOP TEN COUNTRIES)**



Graph 3 – Foreigners those who have been in Türkiye with student term residence permit in 2025 (top ten countries)

Source: Presidency of Migration Management <https://en.goc.gov.tr/residencepermits>
(data relevant for 06.02.2025) Accessed: 10.02.2025.

This situation indicates that the migration flows of the OTS countries constitute serious resources for the organization and almost all member countries of the organization are involved. Studying the impact of such influence and interaction requires more in-depth research. For a closer look at the role and relationship of migration as a factor of Turkic integration, it is interesting to consider the case of Kazakhstan

Migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey

The case study of Kazakhstan in the context of Turkic integration and migration is illustrative in view of two factors. First, Kazakhstan was actively involved in the process of Turkic integration, stood at its very origins and assumed the role of a cultural and scientific hub of the OTS. Secondly, the history of migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey has deep roots, which are connected with the formation of the Kazakh diaspora in Turkey, as well as migration for various reasons since the 90s of the 20th century. This process has intensified in the first decade of the 21st century and has taken new shape. Another aspect is the migration of Meskhetian Turks, who can be considered as compatriots.

The existing diaspora is a certain converging aspect between the two countries. Moreover, the first decade of the 21st century was marked by a new wave of migration of Kazakhs to Turkey for permanent residence, related not only to work and study, but also to the acquisition of real estate.

In general, according to the data of “Otandastar Foundation (Otandastar Qory)”¹ 30,000 Kazakhs permanently reside in Turkey (Vo vsekh ugolkah mira – chto ob’edinyayet kazahstancv za rubezhom, 2024). According to the same data, 40,000 Kazakhs stay in Turkey for studies, work and other reasons.

Kazakhs moved to Turkey from China via Mongolia, Tibet, India and Pakistan. Turkey indeed became a second homeland for numerous Kazakh emigrants from Iran, Afghanistan and Hindustan, who were able to find shelter in this country. This policy was in line with the Turkish strategy of supporting “external Turks” (the official name for Turkic peoples outside Anatolia). Kazakhs lived near Istanbul – in Tuzla, Sirkeci and Zeytinburnu. During this period, the settlers were actively taught Turkish language. The migrants also actively learned

craft skills, usually related to leatherwork (Rakisheva B.I., 2009). A certain part remained in Turkey, some of them moved to Europe in the 60-70s.

The study and realization of scientific, humanitarian and investment potential of the Kazakh diaspora are all to be studied and recommendations are to be developed. At the same time, it is important to note that at the bilateral intergovernmental level constant work is carried out and a big role in it is given to the NAO “Otandastar Foundation” (Otandastar Qory). This Foundation not only follows its mission and goals – consolidation of Kazakhs around the world around the historical homeland (including Turkey), but also contributes to the strengthening of scientific and humanitarian vector between the countries, as well as the development of innovations. This Foundation actively cooperates with such structures as Turksoy, TIKA (The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency is a government department subordinate to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism), YBT (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism.Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities), Yunus Emre Institute and others.

New migrations to Turkey date back to the late 1990s of the 20th century, when Turkey became an attractive country for Kazakhstanis in terms of recreation, medical tourism, shopping, etc. The trade corridors (shopping tours) formed in the 90s of the 20th century became important channels of communication and some of them have been preserved until now, although some of them have changed to a new format taking into account diversification and digitalization. This experience has created a positive attitude towards the country and the possibilities of living in Turkey.

The main inflow of Kazakhs to Turkey is related to obtaining residence permits, permanent residence permits and falls within the last 10 years and can be considered as a new wave of Kazakhs for permanent residence. Along with this migration vector, repatriation of Meskhetian Turks is also observed, the effects of which have not yet been properly studied. We can also speak about other vectors of migration from Kazakhstan, which have not been properly investigated in the context of migration motives, ethnic composition and gender and age structure. This gives grounds to label all these processes as mixed migration of Kazakhstanis to Turkey. Along with this, there is already some data that allows to highlight and overview certain types of migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey.

¹ The Fund was established with one hundred percent participation of the state in its authorized capital. The concept has been developed taking into account the main directions of the state policy on issues of support for foreign and ethnic Kazakhs who have arrived in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Investment migration

A significant jump in the migration of Kazakhstani citizens to Turkey occurs in 2021, which may be related to the growing interest in the purchase of

real estate by Kazakhstani citizens in Turkey. Moreover, Kazakhstan is among the first 10 countries whose citizens purchased real estate in Turkey in 2022 (see Chart below).

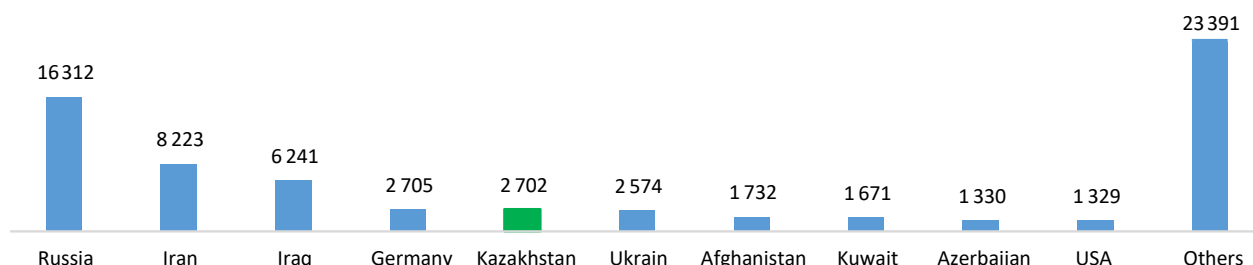


Chart 2 – Top 10 countries whose citizens purchased real estate in Turkey in 2022

Source: House sales to foreigners by nationalities, 2015-2023, Turkish Statistical

One of the reasons for this trend in Turkey is the opportunity to obtain a residence permit, which the government gives when buying a home. Previously lower prices for housing, favorable climate and comfortable living contributed to the growing interest. During the period of low prices Kazakhstanis bought real estate in Istanbul, Antalya, Alanya and other regions of the country.

However, adopted in 2023 changes in obtaining residence permit, permanent residence permit (increase in the cost of real estate for obtaining and others) slightly reduced the flow of Kazakhstanis to Turkey, but the above trend persisted.

In 2023, the Turkish Government decided to change the conditions for obtaining a residence permit by purchasing real estate in Turkey. The Government of Turkey grants the right to reside legally in the territory of Turkey and gives the opportunity to make the choice of *Ikamet* (residence permit).

Despite the fact that the demand for real estate in Turkey in general has decreased compared to the data of 2022, the demand among Kazakhstanis still remains. Some data indicate that part of Kazakhstanis sell or plan to sell their real estate in Turkey. Another part perceives real estate as an opportunity to receive passive income and build further plans for investment and stay in the country. This type of migration is specific for the most part for Kazakhstanis to a greater extent than for other Central Asian countries.

Changes in the program of residence permit through investments concern the increase of the minimum investment amount: For citizenship through the purchase of real estate, the minimum

amount is increased to 400,000 USD. To obtain residence permit through real estate, the minimum amount is 50,000 USD in sparsely populated areas and 75,000 USD in large cities (Residence permit in Turkey (*Ikamet*), 2023).

Also, the personal presence of the investor and his or her spouse in Turkey is now required to apply for citizenship. Previously, it was sufficient to submit the documents through a proxy, but now the investor and his or her spouse must be fingerprinted and photographed for a passport at the Turkish Migration Service. At the same time, minor children of the investor do not need to come to the country for this procedure. Another important change concerns the status of the spouse of the investor, to join the program, the spouse must have a valid residence permit (residence permit) in Turkey at the time of application for citizenship. However, it is also possible to join the program after the investor and his/her children have already obtained Turkish passports. In this case, the investor must obtain the written consent of the second parent before submitting the application (Turkish Citizenship for Investment: What has changed in 2024, 2024).

These changes may affect investment migration from Kazakhstan, as personal presence is now required to apply for citizenship, as well as compliance with new conditions for obtaining residence permits and citizenship through investment.

It is also necessary to mention the citizenship program, which may be of interest to Kazakhstani citizens in the context of investment migration. In 2025, the program of obtaining Turkish citizenship for investment continues to operate, offering several

options for foreign investors, including citizens of Kazakhstan.

The main ways to obtain Turkish citizenship through investment in 2025 are covered on the websites of leading companies and have minor changes (Turkish Citizenship by Investment, 2025).

Purchase of real estate: Purchase of residential or commercial real estate for an amount of \$400,000 or more. The property must remain in the investor's possession for at least three years;

Investing in government bonds or investment funds: Investing \$500,000 or more in government bonds or investment fund units. These investments must also be maintained for three years;

Bank Deposit: Placement of a deposit in a Turkish bank in the amount of 500,000 USD or more for a period of at least three years.

It is also necessary to note a number of advantages that Kazakhstanis receive at Advantages of Turkish Citizenship (Turkish Citizenship for Investment, 2024).

Visa-free access: The Turkish passport grants visa-free or simplified access to more than 120 countries, including Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

E-2 Visa Opportunity in the U.S.: Turkish citizens can apply for an E-2 nonimmigrant business visa in the U.S., which allows them to live and work in the U.S. on an investment business basis.

Second citizenship: Turkey allows dual citizenship, which allows one to retain Kazakh citizenship while obtaining Turkish citizenship.

Thus, investment migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey is seen as a very important potential that can be utilized in the context of the investment direction of the OTS.

Educational migration

It is also worth noting that getting Turkish higher education has interest among foreign citizens, including citizens of Kazakhstan. The popularity of studying in Turkey for students from Kazakhstan is due to the rather high quality of higher education, recognition of the diploma among EU countries, a variety of modern demanded educational programs, the presence of a multicultural student environment, modern university infrastructure, affordable prices and the ability to quickly learn the Turkish language. Students from Kazakhstan are also attracted to Turkey by the opportunity to work in combination with their studies.

One motivating trend is also the Turkish government scholarship program *Türkiye Bursları* (Turkish Scholarships).

Thus, as of 2023, there were more than 150,000 foreign students in Turkey. Along with this, it is important to note that Kazakhstan is among the top ten countries of origin of foreign students in Turkey with the number of 6,416 (**Graph 4.**). As of the beginning of 2025, according to the Presidency of Migration Management, there are 9,658 students in Turkey (data relevant for 06.02.2025) Accessed: 10.02.2025. Of course, this is almost five times less than the number of Kazakhstani students in Russia, which according to data for 2024 has about 60,000 students (*V rossijskih vuzah obuchaetsya pochti 60 tysyach kazahstanskih studentov*, 2024), however, this is a significant number of young people, which is a potential link between the two countries in economic, cultural and other aspects.

According to Baignews, more than 2,500 Kazakhstani students have graduated from Turkish advanced universities and are contributing to the development of relations between the two countries. The same source reports that according to the Turkish Higher Education Council, 8,219 Kazakh students will study in Turkish universities in 2022-2023 (*Nikakie krizisy ne strashny: kak razvivayutsya otnosheniya mezhdur Turciej i Kazahstanom*, 2023).

The difference in statistics between 6,416 for 2023 (August) and 8,219 for 2023 is probably due to different methodology, later date of obtaining student status due to visa-free regime, entry in September-October (studies start in October), level of students' education and research status, etc. The difference in the number of foreign students in the top 10 countries for several years in a row and the constant positive dynamics (even during 2022-2025) indicates a steady trend of educational migration. However, being in the top 10 countries in terms of the number of foreign students for several years in a row and the constant positive dynamics (even during 2022-2025) speaks of a stable trend of educational migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey.

It should be noted that one of the contributing factors is the sustainable cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan in the field of education as part of the cultural and humanitarian direction. In Kazakhstan, the International Kazakh-Turkish University named after Akhmet Yasawi in Turkestan, opened under the agreement between the governments of Kazakhstan and Turkey. Ahmet Yasawi International Kazakh-Turkish University in Turkestan, opened under the agreement between the governments of Kazakhstan and Turkey. The university was opened in 1991 for the purpose of training of highly qualified personnel from among the youth of

Turkicspeaking countries (*Akhmet Yassawi University*, 2025). In 1992, the university was granted the status of an international university. The location of the university is also symbolic, as Turkestan is located in the spiritual center of the Turkic world

and is the first university to receive the status of an international institution of higher education in Kazakhstan. The university is a center that attracts not only students from Kazakhstan and Turkey, but also from all over the Turkic world.

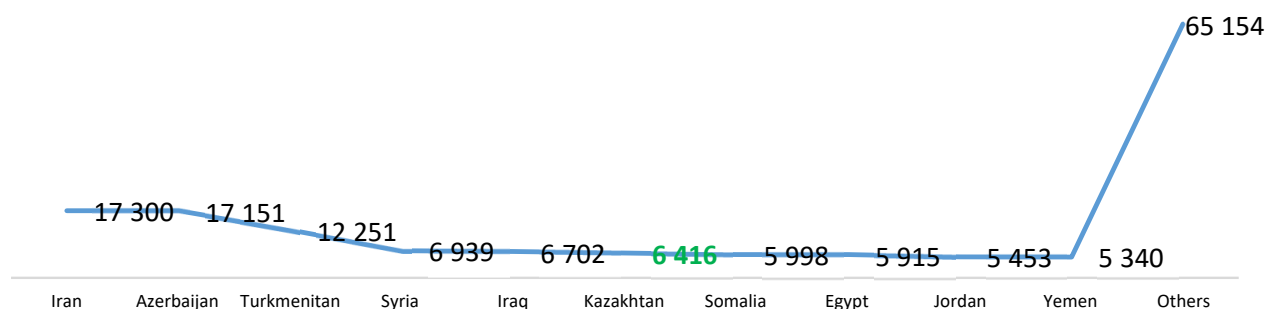


Chart 3 – Top 10 countries in Turkey with student residence permit (August 2023)
Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2023.

Branches of this university operate as research institutes in cities such as Almaty, Shymkent and Kentau (Nikakie krizisy ne strashny: kak razvivayutsya otnosheniya mezhdur Turciej i Kazahstanom, 2023).

Since 1996, Kazakhstan has had the Suleiman Demirel University (SDU), which is a private educational institution with an internationally recognized program. Suleyman Demirel University (SDU) is a private educational institution with an internationally recognized program.

In recent years, the issue of opening branches of leading Turkish universities in Kazakhstan has been actively discussed at the governmental level (Tureckie vuzy planiruyut otkryt' filialy v Kazahstane, 2023); Tureckij universitet otkroet filial v Kazahstane, 2024). Such a step will strengthen the educational component of cooperation and will contribute to further internationalization of education and strengthen bilateral relations.

Thus, the educational vector from Kazakhstan to Turkey has a rather diversified character.

It should be noted that cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan in the field of education is an important part of cultural and humanitarian direction. In Turkey there are monuments to outstanding personalities of the Kazakh people – Abai, Abylaihan, Suyunbai, Zhambyl Zhabaev, Magzhan Zhumabaev, Kabanbai Batyr and the first president of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. There is a school named after Abay Kunanbayev in Istanbul. Schools in Erzurum and Mush provinces were named after Al-Farabi. In September, in honor of the centennial

anniversary of Turkey, Kasym-Jomart Tokayev instructed to give one of the streets in Astana the name “Anadoly”. The unions of writers of the two countries actively cooperate with each other. To date, the works of more than 100 Kazakh poets and writers have been translated into Turkish (Nikakie krizisy ne strashny: kak razvivayutsya otnosheniya mezhdur Turciej i Kazahstanom, 2023).

It should be noted that Kazakhstan is also a migration center in Central Asia, including for educational migrants. However, this study examines migration specifically to Turkey and the main trends associated with it.

Thus, educational migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey is an important factor that strengthens cooperation at the bilateral level and in general, within the OTS space.

Other types of migration

Migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey has other types – migration for employment purposes, family migration, marriage migration, medical tourism and others. However, it is not possible to cover all migration trends within the framework of this study due to the limitation framework.

It can be noted that according to the results of surveys conducted by the authors, migrants from Kazakhstan who arrived for employment purposes are self-employed or are involved in such spheres as tourism, trade, real estate and others. However, for the current period there are no precise statistics and breakdown by areas of employment.

In general, according to the official data of the Turkish government, migration of Kazakhstani citi-

zens to Turkey tends to increase in number of cases. At the same time, statistical data from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan (ASP&R RK) also show an upward trend in migration, with the exception of 2023, but do not reflect

the real situation of movements compared to Turkish data.

According to the data of ASP&R RK in 2022 and 2023, 97 and 58 citizens left Kazakhstan for Turkey respectively, while 249 and 315 citizens entered Kazakhstan from Turkey (**Table below**).

Table 1 – Turkey-Kazakhstan Mutual Migration for 2020-2023

Direction of migration	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Turkey-Kazakhstan	312	217	249	315	No data
Kazakhstan – Turkey	53	97	97	58	No data

Source: Data from Bureau of National Statistics. Agencies for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2024). Retrived from <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/social-statistics/demography/publications/183449/>

Despite the permanent record-keeping system, it is still difficult to differentiate and accurately define the structure of migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey and back. This is due to high migration mobility, visa-free regime, repeated migration and re-immigration, as well as other factors.

Thus, migration from Kazakhstan to Turkey is a multifaceted and complex process. A whole series of pulling, holding and pushing factors have formed several migration trends – investment, educational, labor, marriage, medical and other types of migration. These tendencies cover migration flows to Turkey from Kazakhstan.

In the process of migration, all participants in the migration process face a series of challenges in the process of integration and adaptation to Turkish society, but the Turkic factor is seen as mitigating and contributing to the mitigation of difficult circumstances. Additional difficulties arise due to the changed international situation, which causes economic instability and, as a consequence, the attempts of the Turkish government to control and coordinate migration flows by adjusting migration policy in certain aspects, in particular, the issuance of residence permits, etc. The Turkish government is also trying to control and coordinate migration flows.

In addition, historical background, sustainable cultural and humanitarian cooperation, the increasing role of Turkey's soft power and contemporary political developments contribute to the convergence and growth of migration processes between the two countries

Migration processes between Kazakhstan and Turkey is only one case, which shows the potential

of the OTS not only in the investment and educational sphere, but also in other sectors. Certainly, migration cases of other participants and observers of the OTS have their own specifics, due to different (different) economic structure, political and other factors, but the study of these cases will reveal the integration potential to a fuller extent.

Conclusion

Thus, the Turkic vector of integration formed over three decades and as a result – the Organization of Turkic States has great potential for the implementation and strengthening of multilateral cooperation through cultural, humanitarian, investment aspects in the face of new challenges and security risks both at the regional and international levels.

Shaping the overall agenda of the organization and strengthening the institutions of the OTSs will contribute to the development of strategic activities in line with the organization's directions.

Along with the successes of Turkic integration, there are also a number of obstacles that slow down the process of rapprochement, including the lack of a single geographical space, a strong integration center, in particular in the economic sphere, as well as differences in mentality.

Migration processes within the OTS space have the potential to strengthen the organization and, first of all, in the economic, cultural and educational spheres. However, it seems important to use such components of integration processes as the formation of a common labor market, which would contribute more to economic and cultural rapproche-

ment and increase the turnover of services in the OTS space.

The case of migration processes from Kazakhstan to Turkey cannot be defined as a model or a template that fits all countries but it shows how diversified mobility patterns can be in the OTS area. At the same time, the study shows that the factors that attracted migrants to Turkey may be mostly relevant and similar for other OTS countries, but the level and structure of the economy along with the legislation in the OTS countries may initiate different trends and flows of migrants.

A review analysis of migration flows from Kazakhstan to Turkey also shows that integration processes along the Turkic vector contain potential for a whole range of factors. Along with this, it is important to study the challenges and develop possible approaches to coordination and regulation.

This research is funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant No. AP23483774 «Deepening Turkic integration: prospects, geopolitical risks and threats for Kazakhstan»).

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Information about the authors:

- Leila Fedorovna Delovarova – Ph.D., Acting Associate Professor of the Department of International Relations and World Economy at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: delovarova@mail.ru).
- Gulnara Serikbayevna Baikushikova (corresponding author) – Ph.D., Head of the Department of International Relations and World Economy of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: baikushikova.gulnara@kaznu.kz).
- Assel Valitkhanovna Khamzayeva – Ph.D., Acting Associate Professor of the Department of International Relations and World Economy of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: asel.hamzaeva@kaznu.kz).

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

- Деловарова Лейла Федоровна – Ph.D., Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университетіндегі халықаралық қатынастар және әлемдік экономика кафедрасының доцент м.а. (Алматы қ., Қазақстан, e-mail: delovarova@mail.ru).
- Байкушикова Гүлнара Серікбаевна (корреспондент – автор) – Ph.D., Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университетіндегі халықаралық қатынастар және әлемдік экономика кафедрасының меңгерушісі (Алматы қ., Қазақстан, e-mail: baikushikova.gulnara@kaznu.kz).
- Хамзаева Асель Валитхановна – Ph.D., Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университетіндегі халықаралық қатынастар және әлемдік экономика кафедрасының доцент м.а., әл- Алматы қ., Қазақстан, e-mail: asel.hamzaeva@kaznu.kz).

Информация об авторах:

- Деловарова Лейла Федоровна – Ph.D., и.о.доцента кафедры международных отношений и мировой экономики Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби (г. Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: delovarova@mail.ru).
- Байкушикова Гүлнара Серікбаевна (автор-корреспондент) – Ph.D., заведующая кафедрой международных отношений и мировой экономики Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби (г. Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: baikushikova.gulnara@kaznu.kz).
- Хамзаева Асель Валитхановна – Ph.D., и.о.доцента кафедры международных отношений и мировой экономики Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби (г. Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: asel.hamzaeva@kaznu.kz).

Previously sent December 11, 2024.

Accepted March 3, 2025.